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ABSTRACT

This compilation of materials from the SLATE (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English) Steering Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English reflects the ongoing concerns and discussions that SLATE has held about the free exchange of thoughts and ideas throughout its history. The collection contains "starter sheets" and newsletter articles, dealing with any aspect of intellectual freedom, that have been published in Volumes 1-17 of the SLATE newsletter since its inception in 1976. The materials in the collection, while indicating their original publication dates, are arranged by the following broad categories: (Part 1) NCTE Actions and Activities; (Part 2) First Amendment Issues; (Part 3) Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Textbooks; (Part 4) Affiliate Actions and Resolutions; and (Part 5) Legislation. The collection includes approximately 70 articles. Each part of the collection is arranged primarily in chronological order; however, articles on the same topic are grouped together. Part 1 discusses NCTE's involvement in court cases, writing resolutions, providing materials for teachers and schools facing challenges, activities of the Committee against Censorship, and offering a model for state legislation based on "The Students Right To Read." Part 2 examines First Amendment issues. Part 3 presents four Slate "starter sheets" addressing issues of censorship, selection, and developing rationales for instructional materials. Part 4 covers affiliate actions and resolutions. Part 5 provides accounts of legislative actions concerning issues of intellectual freedom. (NKA)

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SLATE

on

Intellectual Freedom

edited and compiled by

Jean E. Brown
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1994

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Introduction

Throughout its history, SLATE has addressed, through Starter Sheets and newsletter articles, issues concerning issues of intellectual freedom and the forces that seek to limit it. This on-going concern dates to the first issue of the SLATE newsletter in 1976; however, the focus on Intellectual Freedom has sharpened since the NCTE Executive Committee, at its September, 1990 meeting, authorized SLATE to serve as NCTE's intellectual freedom network . In keeping with this mission, the SLATE Steering Committee decided at its 1991 meeting in Seattle to authorize a compilation of materials that had been published by SLATE concerning the multi-faceted aspects of censorship and intellectual freedom. This collection reflects the on-going concerns and discussions that SLATE has held about the free exchange of thoughts and ideas throughout its history. To this end, the Starter Sheets and newsletter articles, dealing with any aspect of intellectual freedom, that have been published in Volumes 1-17 are included here. The materials, while indicting their original publications dates, are arranged by the following broad categories:

Part 1 NCTE Actions and Activities
Part 2 First Amendment Issues
Part 3 Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Textbooks
Part 4 Affiliate Actions and Resolutions
Part 5 Legislation

These materials could have been organized in a number of ways. Since this collection includes approximately seventy articles, it seemed obvious that an organizational structure beyond simple chronology is essential to make the materials more readily accessible to readers. Certainly, many of the articles might appropriately be placed in more than one category. For example, reports of court cases are included in Parts 1, 2, 4, and 5. Each part is arranged

primarily in chronological order; however, articles on the same topic are grouped together. For example in Part 1, four articles concerning the Island Trees censorship case are grouped although they were published over a three year period as the case progressed through the court system.

In Part 1, NCTE Actions and Activities, the activities of the Council are traced from the organization of SLATE in 1976. This part presents NCTE's being involved in court cases, writing resolutions, providing materials for teachers and schools facing challenges, recounting the activities of Committee Against Censorship, and offering a model for state legislation based on *The Students Right to Read*, among other roles that NCTE has played in recent years. Part 2 examines First Amendment Issues. In this part issues of freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of press are examined. Additionally, the issue of secular humanism is discussed in three articles. Part 3 Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Textbooks presents four SLATE Starter Sheets addressing issues of censorship, selection, and developing rationales for instructional materials. Additionally, issues of textbooks and their adoption are also included in this part of the collection. In Part 4 Affiliate Actions and Resolutions are covered. This includes reports of censorship attempts to resolutions that state affiliates have taken to the development of Nebraska Academic Freedom Coalition. Part 5 Legislation, provides accounts of legislative actions concerning issues of intellectual freedom.

Jean E. Brown for the SLATE Steering Committee

Part 1

NCTE Actions and Activities

New Action Wing for Council Being Planned
(Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1976, p. 1)

A proposal from the Executive Committee that a new action wing of NCTE be established has been approved by the Council's Board of Directors. The proposed wing, creation of which was spearheaded by Stephen Dunning during his year as NCTE president, has been given the acronym SLATE-for Support for the Learning and Teaching of English. Once established, SLATE will have as its central purpose the creation of environments for free and responsible teaching and learning of English. To that end, SLATE will engage in such actions as the following:

1. monitoring and reporting on local, state, and national policy-making groups;
2. educating members and others to the political implications of legislative, legal, and agency actions, both private and public:
3. preparing press releases and position papers on issues where the expertise of the Council or the welfare for English teaching needs to be represented;
4. making available expert testimony;
5. linking itself with other groups to take appropriate action on issues of shared concern;
6. seeking other ways to interpret and develop Council policy, and letting such policy be known where it might enhance the environment for free and responsible teaching and learning of English.

Following the Annual Business Meeting, NCTE members attending the convention in San Diego elected a SLATE Steering Committee to refine planning for the action wing, which could emerge after the 1976 NCTE convention as a separate entity within the Council.

Although the Executive Committee had the authority to appoint the steering committee for SLATE, it sought support from the Board of Directors because the plan for SLATE involves a marked change in Council practice, if not policy: the principal support for SLATE's work will come from voluntary contributions. On this point, the Executive Committee commented as follows in a memorandum to the Board of Directors:

> Believing an even more active commitment to-and engagement in-social action and political education is both the will of the membership and the destiny of the Council, the Executive Committee seeks advice and support. It is vested in the Executive Committee to appoint committees, commissions, and task forces, and to support those groups financially. But the Executive Committee's vision of SLATE is such that separate funding seems reasonable, perhaps necessary. The present budget is inadequate to support both present services and the new activities envisioned here.
>
> Believing them essential to continuing improvements in English teaching and learning, the Executive Committee reaffirms its support of such activities as regular publication of a variety of journals, pamphlets, and monographs, support for affiliates, for regional and national meetings, and for committees, commissions, and task forces. The Executive Committee believes that the Council should seek new resources and make new commitments fitting the changing social and political scenes. When new resources are generated, the Executive Committee believes SLATE will provide the Council with a voice that will be heard that *must* be heeded in legislatures in courts of law, in school boards, in state offices of education, and in policy-making groups at the national level.

Council Represented at AAP Meeting
(Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1976, p. 4)

As a consequence of a meeting attended by Stephen Dunning, immediate past president of NCTE, the American Association of Publishers (AAP) Freedom to Read Committee has been alerted to the Council's interest in collaborating with the AAP committee in resolving issues related to intellectual and educational freedom. At the meeting, held in New York City last summer, Mr. Dunning spoke briefly on the common aims and "shared agenda" of NCTE and AAP in protecting freedoms established by the First Amendment. He urged publishers to speak out publicly on issues of academic freedom and to keep NCTE informed of their activities on freedom's behalf.

NCTE Supports National
Ad Hoc Committee Against Censorship
(Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1976, p. 4)

Since its inception following recent attempts by the United States Supreme Court to clarify standards for censoring obscenity, the National Ad Hoc Committee Against Censorship, an alliance of national organizations, has been supported by NCTE. The Council is represented at meetings of the committee by Robert Spencer Johnson, Long Island Council of Teachers of English.

In 1973 and 1974 the Supreme Court issued a number of decisions which many people-including four of the nine justices-feared would lead to serious attacks on freedom of expression. In the past 30 months, over 250 bills have been introduced in more than 40 state legislatures in an attempt to comply with the Court's standards. At best, most of the bills are unclear and contradictory. To clarify legislation and to protect rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, the Ad Hoc Committee provides information to state and local legislatures, including on occasion the testimony of expert witnesses. In addition, it helps its participating organizations educate their own members to the dangers of censorship and to ways of opposing it.

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As part of its program, the Ad Hoc Committee has issued "Statement of Concern," which the NCTE Executive Committee has endorsed. The statement follows:

> The steady erosion of First Amendment rights, stemming from the Supreme Court's 1973-74 obscenity holdings, menaces ever more critically the freedom of communication that is the indispensable condition of a healthy democracy. In a pluralistic society it would be impossible for all people at all times to agree on the value of all ideas; and fatal to moral, artistic and intellectual growth if they did.

Some of the undersigned organizations reject all barriers abridging access to any material, however controversial or even abhorrent to some. Others reject barriers for adults, so long as their individual right of choice is not infringed. All of us are united in the conviction that an unacceptable dictatorship over our minds and a dangerous opening to religious, political, artistic, and intellectual repression.

At a meeting on December 9, 1975, in New York City, the Committee presented a program focused on three threats to the *First Amendment*: the censorship of obscenity; the censorship of textbooks; and governmental censorship of information. Franklin S. Hayman, professor, Communications Studies, Northwestern University, provided a historical review of court decisions related to censorship of obscenity. In a mock case of textbook censorship, those attending the conference role-played the parts of parents, students, teachers, and school board members at an open meeting of the board. Diverse attitudes toward secrecy in government were offered by Morton H. Halperin, former senior staff member of the National Security and Civil Liberties Project, and Frank N. Trager, professor of international affairs and director, National Security Program, New York University.

In addition to NCTE, organizations endorsing the Ad Hoc Committee's Statement of Concern include the American Civil Liberties Union, American Jewish Committee, American Library Association, American Orthopsychiatric Association, Associated Council of the Arts, Authors League of America, Child Study Association, Directors Guild of America, National Council of Churches of Christ, National Council of Jewish Women, National Education Association, Speech Communication Association, The Newspaper Guild, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, U.S. National Student Association, and Writers Guild of America, East, Inc.

Fighting Censorship
[Vol. 4 # 6, November, 1979, p.2]

At their October meeting, the NCTE Executive Committee pledged funds for preparation of an *amicus curiae* brief in the pending appeal of the Long Island District Court decision on the Island Trees censorship case (Pico v. Island Trees Board of Education). In that case, brought on behalf of students in the district who opposed the school board's removal of eleven titles from the school library, the court was asked to overturn the ban on the ground that the board did not consider the quality of the books as a whole, but acted only on objections to the language or ideas in excerpts.

Since the original decision to remove the titles, two *(Laughing Boy* and *Black Boy)* have been returned. Nine, however, are still banned: *Go Ask Alice, A Reader for Writers, A Hero Ain't Nothing But a Sandwich. Soul on Ice, Best Short Stories by Negro Writers, The Fixer, The Naked Ape, Down These Mean Streets, and Slaughterhouse Five.*

Immediately after the Executive Committee action, the SLATE Steering Committee authorized an appeal to SLATE contributors for support of the *amicus* brief, with any excess to be held to support Supreme Court litigation if necessary.

Island Trees Case: Students Win Round
(Vol. 5 #10, November, 1980, page 5)

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, in New York, has ruled in favor of student plaintiffs in the case of *Pico v. Island Trees.* In that case, high school students contested the Island Trees school board's decision to withdraw certain works of modern fiction from the school library. NCTE and other education organizations filed a friend-of-the-court brief supporting the students.

Island Trees Censorship Case Heard by High Court
(Vol. 7, # 3, May, 1982, pages 3 & 4)

The censorship case of *Pico v. Island Trees* was heard before the U.S. Supreme Court in March, and a decision is awaited. The case concerns the authority of school boards to remove from school libraries books which have been placed there through standard selection procedures. At the appeal stage, NCTE and other education-related organizations supported the claim of students in the Island Trees district on Long Island. Students said their First Amendment rights were infringed upon when the school board removed a number of modern fiction and nonfiction titles from the high school library, calling them "objectionable."

At the hearing, reporters monitored the justices' questions for clues to their thinking on the issue. *Education Daily* noted that "several justices seemed doubtful that a court standard could be set for unconstitutional censorship. Yet other justices were obviously opposed to impromptu school board bans on unpopular volumes."

Replying to questions from Justice Sandra O'Connor, school board attorney George Lipp contended that removing books should be a board's prerogative if the rationale was "reasonably related to a legitimate state interest." He agreed that a Democrat-controlled board could not remove favorable references to Republicans.

Justice Thurgood Marshall's line of questioning highlighted the school board's lack of a specific policy basis for its ban. "How can you regulate without standards?" he asked. According to *Education Daily* (March 3), Justice Byron White "wryly suggested a test for 'pervasive vulgarity.'"

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High Court's Island Trees Decision Goes against Censors
(Vol. 7, # 5, September 1982, pages 1 & 2)

If a school board removes books from a school library, students may, under certain conditions, now take the board to court on First Amendment grounds. The long-awaited Supreme Court decision in the *Island Trees v. Pico* case, handed down June 25, has been hailed in some quarters as a victory against censorship, even though the court decided only 5-4 in the students' favor and the justices offered a variety of opinions. The high court's ruling reverses a federal district court judge's 1979 summary judgment denying the students a trial on the issue.

The *Island Trees* case stems from a complaint brought by students and the American Civil Liberties Union against the Island Trees (New York) school board after the board removed nine books, chiefly works of modern fiction, from the high school library. When the students carried their case to the appeals court, NCTE joined with other education related associations to sponsor a friend-of-the-court brief on their behalf. NCTE members individually contributed funds to support this effort. The appeals decision went in favor of the students; the board then took the case to the Supreme Court.

"Since there has never been a trial, the case... presented the Supreme Court with an abstract question: Was there a First Amendment right at stake at all, or was the school board's action one of unreviewable discretion?" Linda Greenhouse wrote in the *New York Times* June 26. *Education Daily* (June 28) described the Supreme Court decision as "narrow and emotion-packed." There was no majority opinion. In a plurality opinion fully supported only by Justices Thurgood Marshall and John Paul Stevens, Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. stated, "Local school boards may not remove books from library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to 'prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.'" He said, further, that "Our Constitution does not permit the official suppression of *ideas*."

Two other justices had differing opinions but supported the students' rights to a trial. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Justices Lewis F. Powell, William H. Rehnquist, and Sandra Day O'Connor dissented. Justice Powell wrote that although "In different contexts the destruction of written materials has been the symbol of despotism .... the removal of nine vulgar or racist books from a high school library by a concerned local school board does not raise this specter. For me, today's decision symbolizes a debilitating encroachment upon the institutions of a free people." (The school board, in removing the books, had called them "anti-American, Anti-Christian, anti-Semitic and just plain filthy," adding that they constituted a "moral danger.")

"Irregular Procedures"

Justice Brennan noted that the school board's substitution of "highly irregular and ad hoc" procedures for its standard book review policy in banning the nine books figured in the plurality decision. He stated that school boards "rightly possess significant discretion to determine the content of their school libraries," but stressed that such "discretion may not be exercised in a narrowly partisan or political manner." Justice Brennan stressed that the Court recognizes school boards' right "to establish and apply their curriculum in such a way as to transmit community values." He said the Court decision does not apply to courses taught or to *acquisition* of library books, but only to their *removal* from school libraries.

The *New York Times* report include these comments: "As it worked its way to the Supreme Court, the Island Trees case became symbol of growing national debate over whether school officials who respond to 'community pressure by taking unpopular books off library shelves act appropriately as educators or improperly as censors. There have been dozens of similar incidents around the country.

"While the ruling today did not place the Supreme Court firmly on either side of the debate, an opposite ruling would have removed the debate entirely from the realm of constitutional law."

Edna Yarns, mother of one of the student plaintiffs, told the *New York Times* (June 27), "I don't think a school board has the right to go into a school library and remove books that have been placed there by former boards and expert teachers and educators .... If you hire well-educated people to make certain decisions, it seems to me you should allow them to do the job that they've been trained and are being paid to do."

"Act Carefully"

The *Times* quoted Bruce Rich, counsel for the Freedom to Read Committee of the Association of American Publishers, as saying the decision "sends a very important message to school boards. Act carefully."

What happens next in the *Island Trees* case? According to *Newsday* (June 26), "Civil liberties attorney Arthur Eisenberg said... he will seek to have the case put on the trial calendar of the federal court in Uniondale [New York]. The Island Trees school board must decide whether to drop the case-which could not only be costly but also subject board members to public scrutiny." (NYT: 6/26, 6/27; ED: 6/28; NEW: 6/26)

More Attempts at Censorship: NCTE Enters Another Case
(Vol. 5, # 5, May 1980, pages 1 & 2)

A high school principal in Peoria bans an issue of the student newspaper containing an editorial criticizing treatment of a student found innocent of a marijuana charge. An Iowa school board forbids use of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* in a sophomore English class while acknowledging that only one of their number has read the entire book. A New York school system carries its fight to suspend the student publishers of an allegedly obscene off-campus newspaper, *Hard Times*, to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Associated Press reports on a trend toward establishment of local "Decency in Education" committees to press for censorship of school materials.

An instance of book banning was headed off in March in Champaign, Illinois. Some members of the Champaign Board of Education proposed withdrawing Paul Zindel's novel *My Darling, My Hamburger* from school libraries, charging it was junk and "ridicules the Catholic tradition of honoring the Madonna." The school administration recommended keeping the book. *(My Darling, My Hamburger* deals with teenage pregnancy.) Among the citizens who commented at the board's open meeting on the issue was Champaign resident Robert Hogan, NCTE executive director. He pointed out that the novel "has been widely praised in reviews," and that the author has won various awards for his writing, including a Pulitzer prize for drama. "Paul Zindel, whatever else he may be, is not a depraved person pandering prurient interests to adolescents," Hogan said.

The Board of Education voted 4-3 not to ban the book. Earlier, school superintendent James Mahan, in recommending against a ban, had said, "I think it is important that students be exposed to the whole range [of literature] ....I have great concern about this. If you decide to remove this book tonight, I will want to have values explicitly spelled out for the future."*(Champaign-Urbana News Gazette*, March 18, 25; *Daily Illini*, March 25, 1980)

As challenges of students' right to read-and write-proliferated in 1980, NCTE entered a second censorship case in the role of friend of the court, advocating freedom to learn. In that case *(Zykan v. Warsaw [Indiana] Community School Corporation and Warsaw School Board of Trustees)*, a high school student brought suit, seeking to reverse school officials' decision to "limit or prohibit the use of certain textbooks, to remove a certain book from the school library, and to delete certain courses from the curriculum." The district court dismissed Zykan's suit, which charged that school officials had violated constitutional guarantees of academic freedom and the "right to know." The case has been appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, in Chicago. If the appeals court also supports school officials, curricula, and school libraries could in the future face greater restraints, imposed by members of the public who disagree with NCTE's position on students' right to read.

An earlier case in which NCTE cooperated with other organizations on an *amicus curiae* brief, *Pico v. Island Trees School Board*, has been heard by the appeals court, and a decision is pending.

"National Importance"

Joining in the Zykan case brief are the Freedom to Read Foundation (American Library Association) and the Indiana Council of Teachers of English. The brief says, in part:

"This case holds national attention and importance. It touches directly on education and freedom to learn, two special concerns to everyone in our society. The purported conflict between these two concerns, as seen by the Warsaw School Board of Trustees, has led to the public burning of books-an event rarely seen in America and frighteningly reminiscent of Germany in the 1930s .... Amici are deeply committed to education and free expression .... "

In setting forth the problem created by efforts of individuals and special interest groups to "impose their narrow political, religious, and social views on public high school students," the brief says "The proposition that students are free to think and explore the world of idea but can read no books by anyone to the left of Herbert Hoover and Douglas Mac Arthur-or to the right of Karl Marx, for that matter-can only be described as the ultimate educational 'Catch-22.'

Charging that the lower court's decision "ignores over fifty years of constitutional law," the brief argues that "The First Amendment does not stop at the school house door. Since *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923), the Supreme Court has held that public school curriculum decisions are *not* immune from judicial scrutiny. Even when the Court has bowed most deeply in judicial deference to local school boards, it has intervened to protect fundamental rights ....

"By its nature, the learning process exposes high school students to widely divergent commentaries on values, customs, laws, and beliefs. School officials must accept a diversity of views in the classroom, because the Constitution will tolerate no state-imposed orthodoxy in the schools regarding political, religious or social beliefs exposed to students..

"The public school should be a vibrant free market of ideas. Indeed, if the 'right to read and be exposed to controversial thoughts' cannot flourish in the school house, the prospects are bleak that it will ever flourish anywhere in society. The Supreme Court has recognized 'the right of the public to receive suitable access to social, political, esthetic, moral and other ideas and experiences .... If public high school students do not share this right, they will find it of little value once they grow old enough to 'deserve' it."

A Potential Benchmark

The brief urges the appeals court to apply "subtle and sensitive tools for judicial scrutiny" to this case because of its potential use as a benchmark for future decisions involving constitutional rights. It stresses that school officials should have "a broad range of discretion" over curriculum decisions. But it says, "We submit that the determinative factor to prove a violation of a student's rights in cases like this is whether a school official or board intentionally acted to impose a closed system of political, religious, and social views on public school students. For example, a decision not to teach evolution because of academic reasons or reasons of time and economy would not implicate the Constitution, but a ban on teaching Darwinian evolution because of religious motives is unconstitutional ....

As with proscribed racial discrimination, the intent of the state officials proves the constitutional violation ....

"All we ask for here is a hearing to sort out permissible education for moral values from impermissible indoctrination in parochial political, religious and social views."

Surveying details of the Zykan case, the brief notes that the defendants "appear to admit that intent is the proper test ... ," that "Warsaw school administrators did not even follow their own procedures for banning books," and that their explanations for the book banning, "considered in light of all the facts, appear to be merely a pretext .... The public has the right to know the truth about the book burnings in Warsaw," the brief says in urging that such an act, "not normal or ordinary in America in 1979" have "a factual hearing," since it challenges "the whole concept of free speech." No date has been set for hearing the Zykan case in the appeals court.

Arguments from the Opposition

What sorts of arguments do school officials use against NCTE's contention that students' constitutional freedoms have been violated? In *Pico v. Island Trees School Board*, the National Association of Secondary School Principals has filed *an amicus curiae* brief supporting the school officials. Ivan Gluckman, counsel for NASSP, summarizes its positions by noting that as citizens, parents have a legal and moral right to object to school materials of which they disapprove, and to organize to make their concerns known.

"The real issue arising in a number of recent court cases, and upon which our positions apparently diverge," Gluckman says, "concerns who should decide what books will or will not be used in the classrooms and libraries of our public schools. It is our belief that this power should be vested in the local school boards and, until very recently, this has been the clear position of the courts. Even now, there seems little argument that the local board is charged by law with the authority and responsibility for the school curriculum, and that this includes selection of books for both classroom and library use.

"But the argument has now been successfully made that even if the board has such legal authority, it does not have the same authority to remove books that it believes to be inappropriate. We believe that this reasoning is logically inconsistent and wrong. If the board has the authority to select books and materials for use in the school, it must have the equal authority to remove them, unless it can be shown to be acting arbitrarily, capriciously, or out of an improper motive such as racial or religious discrimination. The fact that the board may exercise poor judgment, however, is no reason why a court should intervene."

Zykan Censorship Case Plaintiffs Get Second Try
(Vol. 5, # 10, November, 1980, page 5)

An appeals court ruling in the Indiana censorship case of *Zykan v. Warsaw Community School Corp.* called the issue it raises "novel and important." But the three-judge panel recommended that students Blair and Brooke Zykan reframe their charges of censorship. The judges said the Zykans failed to argue that the Warsaw School Board had attempted to promote or suppress a particular ideological view and had not claimed the board's book ban "deprived them of all contact with the material in question."

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The appeals court approved of District Court Judge Allen Sharp's earlier dismissal of the case, but told him to let the plaintiffs amend their arguments. (One appeals judge did not agree with the dismissal order. Judge Luther Swygert said that because many of the books banned in Warsaw had feminist themes, the board may have suppressed inquiry into that body of thought and given the students a legitimate argument.)

But the appeals panel concluded the Zykans had not supplied facts demonstrating "flagrant abuse of discretion" by the school board. Such bodies "will be permitted to make even ill-advised and imprudent decisions without the risk of judicial interference" because of the broad powers they hold, the judges said in their opinion. They rejected the Zykans' claim that the school board had no right to drop a teacher involved in the Warsaw censorship controversy, saying the board, not the teacher, establishes basic standards for instruction. NCTE and other education-related organizations had filed a friend-of-the-court brief at the appeal stage, supporting the students' complaint.

Vendetta against Iranian Girl Brings NCTE Response
(Vol. 5 , # 8, Sept. 1980, p.5)

At Atlantic City High School in New Jersey, teachers' attempt to vent their ire against Iran by punishing an Iranian student backfired. NCTE and its New Jersey affiliate entered the fray by defending high school valedictorian Tina Bahadori's constitutional right of free speech.

History teacher Ted Manos initiated a petition at the school to prevent straight-A student Bahadori from speaking at the June 12 commencement, on grounds that she is Iranian. Bahadori had won that honor in a competition, but Manos called it "poor judgment" to select an Iranian speaker while U.S. hostages were imprisoned in Iran. Fifty-six of the school's 140 teachers and twenty-four staff members signed the petition. As a result, Bahadori quietly withdrew from the commencement program and refused to comment on the fracas.

Queried by the press, Atlantic City school superintendent Jack Eisenstein explained that Bahadori didn't want "to disturb the graduation ceremony. I think [withdrawing] was a good move from a safety point of view. Anything else said might be detrimental to her ...." Eisenstein said the petition-signers were "expressing their patriotism in the way they see it," and concluded that "everybody means well."

Principal William Faunce said school officials had received phone calls threatening protests if Bahadori spoke. He said that to his knowledge, Tina herself was not politically active and had not commented on the current Iranian regime.

Lahna Diskin, Trenton State College, president of the New Jersey Council of Teachers of English, sent a statement of protest to Superintendent Eisenstein and to newspapers. "The petitioners have retaliated against Iran's injustice in a mean and meaningless way," she said in part. "Does denouncing one young woman redeem 53 captives? Tina is being wronged by people who have tried to rekindle the old horror of scapegoating. Patriotic principle that crushes the innocent is misnamed as much as it is demeaned ....

In a June 9 letter to Eisenstein, John Maxwell, NCTE deputy executive director for national relations, wrote, "I cannot believe that 80 of your staff would have signed a petition to block an Iranian student from being class valedictorian, simply on grounds that she is an Iranian. Surely your faculty comprehends that a foreign national has the protection of this nation's Constitution, despite the actions and depredations of her country's leaders. The faculty's action, even though it served only to cause the girl to withdraw, is still nonetheless an action seeking to deny freedom of expression. And certainly you must know that 'safety' cannot be countenanced as an excuse for denial of free speech.

"I sincerely hope that you will lead your faculty into reconsideration of their action and further, to redress the wrong which has been done to Miss Bahadori.

"I understand that the theme of the valedictorian's message is to be "Dreams." It is ironic that the American dream of freedom of expression has been threatened in this incident."

On June 30, the Atlantic City Board of Education voted unanimously to censure Manos for circulating the petition. Eisenstein said the censure "just says publicly that we don't approve of what Mr. Manos did." The board resolved to send a letter of apology to Bahadori, and went on to set a policy forbidding circulation on school property of any petitions that may violate the public accommodation provisions of New Jersey's law against discrimination.

Schlatter Chairs Censorship Panel at Library Meeting
(Vol. 8, #4, July 1983, page 1)

Frank Schlatter, SLATE Chair, served as moderator for a panel on censorship and book selection at the New Mexico Library Association in Santa Fe, New Mexico, recently. Panelists with Schlatter included Richard Bradford, author of *Red Sky at Morning;* Dwight Meyers, Western Regional Manager with PrenticeHall Publishers (and closely associated with one of the most banned books in America, *Go Ask Alice);* Tess Greenup, NCTE member with the Albuquerque *Journal;* a school board member; a member of the State Department of Education; and a lawyer.

SLATE and NCTE materials on censorship were distributed at the meeting, and the SLATE Chair surveyed librarians in attendance regarding censorship issues.

The librarians were questioned about their use of book and media selection guidelines, their procedures for handling complaints, the number of official complaints registered in the last year, the reasons for the complaints, and the books involved. Most librarians reported no complaints. The ones who had received complaints said that the challenged books were *Webster's Dictionary, Custom Van Book, Viva La Raza, The Gay Health Guide,* the entire occult section, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Empress,* and *Bang, Bang, You're Dead.*

The majority of librarians indicated that their high school and public library shelves include books that are considered controversial. They circulate such works as *Go Ask Alice, The Grapes of Wrath, The Catcher in the Rye, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Slaughterhouse Five,* and *Soul on Ice.*

When asked if they would be interested in subscribing to a reasonable service that would provide analytical papers written by knowledgeable people in defense of controversial books that *should* stay on library shelves, all the librarians were overwhelmingly affirmative.

As a consequence of the librarians' interest, Schlatter has been investigating with the chair of the NCTE Committee against Censorship the feasibility of an NCTE-sponsored service that would make available individual rationales of quality literature that should remain on library shelves and in English language arts classrooms.

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Notes from the NCTE Committee Against Censorship
(Vol. 10, # 1, February 1985, p. 1-3)

Frank Schlatter, Chair of SLATE, suggested that because of the increased concern that teachers have with problems of censorship, it would be appropriate for the SLATE Newsletter to include items interest concerning censorship. The Committee Against Censorship believes it has not communicated widely enough its sense of the seriousness of the problem of censorship and its effect on teaching, as well as a number of suggestions for dealing with the problem. We welcome the opportunity to use the SLATE Newsletter.

Book Burning?

In a recent book entitled *Book Burning*, by Cal Thomas (Crossways Books, Good News Publishers, Westchester, Illinois, $5.95), the author charges that the real book burning is by the educational and library professions, who refuse to purchase books for the libraries that represent Thomas's point of view. Thomas is a national officer in Moral Majority, Inc. Thomas lists several books that are censored, as he says---that is, not purchased for school or public libraries. There may be some correctness in the charge that books representing a moral majority point of view tend not to be purchased for the schools or public libraries. It is understandable why some of these books are not purchased. In the case of *Book Burning*, the title and much of the book is deceptive, distorted, and unscholarly. It engages in name-calling and scapegoating. The book refers only to one actual case of book burning, though many have occurred in the last ten years. Actual book burning apparently does not bother Thomas. Nevertheless, the book ought to be in the libraries, so that members of the general public can decide for themselves the merit of the charges that Thomas makes in a general and unspecified way against the educational and library world. A few years ago a book entitled *Calories Don't Count* was removed from the library at Madison, Wisconsin, on the grounds, probably correct, that the book gave inaccurate information. However, other persons protested the removal and suggested that it is not the function of the library to decide whether such books give accurate information or not, but a matter for the general public to decide. The librarians agreed and the book was returned to the shelves. Similarly, in the case of *Book Burning* and other titles that represent a moral majority point of view, the library should stock such books and allow the public to make up its own mind about them. Another reason for having such books is to maintain a historical record of this period in our history.

Censorship of High School Literature Textbooks

There is a doctoral dissertation entitled *Censorship of Literature Textbooks in Tennessee*, by Dorothy Thompson Weathersby, completed in the department of secondary education at the University of Tennessee in 1975. The dissertation is available in facsimile form from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan. For persons interested in the effect of censorship on education, the book is quite valuable. Much attention has been given to the effect of Texas school textbook selection procedures on the rest of the nation. Less attention has been given to what is happening in other states. It is quite obvious that the problem is larger than the reports about Texas indicate.

Anecdotal reports from several states indicate that many high school literature texts are quietly bowdlerized, often in senseless and capricious fashion. Weathersby's report shows in detail how supposedly reputable publishers quietly delete materials, or rewrite classics. I was surprised in teaching Shakespeare at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to learn from my students how often high school students are given modified versions of Shakespeare. An example is the omission of the scene in which the poet Cinna is torn to pieces by the mob, in the play *Julius Caesar*.

Readers of this report who teach Shakespeare may wish to compare the text they use with an original text--for example, the great Norton *Facsimile of the First Folio of Shakespeare*. That volume should be available in a public library or university library accessible to most high school teachers. There are also good recent texts of Shakespeare used in various college classes, which might be used for comparison with whatever high school texts are in use.

Weathersby made a content analysis of twenty-two literature texts listed as basal texts on the 1966 or 1971 official textbook lists for Tennessee. These were texts for grades ten to twelve, published by seven reputable companies: Ginn and Company; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; Holt, Rinehart and Winston; Houghton Mifflin Company; Random House; Scott, Foresman and Company; and McGraw-Hill Book Company. Weathersby read all the literature selections in these twenty-two textbooks, and analyzed the use of language and the content of the various books with regard to: minority group people, women, various social mores, the body and various bodily functions, killing and violence, religion, war, and patriotic values.

She concluded that "This examination of altered, omitted, and printed material indicated that... the publishers were keenly aware of what some parents and teachers would criticize as inappropriate material. In order to avoid these protests, publishers, then, very silently removed anything that might possibly be cause for complaint. The results of their actions are texts filled with uncontroversial ideas with which all can agree and mutilated literary selections cut almost beyond recognition by censoring editors."

The details of omitted or modified material seem surprising. A few examples are as follows: The Harcourt literature text omitted the phrases: "and fifteen or twenty Negroes" and "the Negro quarter" from Mark Twain's *Autobiography*. The passage in which the Grangerford sons drink to their parents was omitted from Scott, Foresman's version of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In various versions of *Huckleberry Finn*, the word "nigger" was either dropped, or changed to "slave," "servant," "Negro," "folks," "hand," or "boy." Only Ginn dealt openly with the problem and did so with quotations from Lionel Trilling who said that "the word should be driven out of the language... but the fact that [such words] were once used ought not be suppressed... [that] ethnic groups endured . . . social disadvantage... should be confronted and dealt with... not evaded or forgotten." The drunken porter scene is omitted from several texts of *Macbeth*. Scott, Foresman omitted ten lines from *Hamlet*, in the passage in which Hamlet proposes to lie in Ophelia's lap while watching the traveling players perform. In addition Scott, Foresman omitted about one hundred other line for no reason apparent to Weathersby. Of the three texts which contained *Hamlet* only Holt, Rinehart printed the entire play.

The relatively skimpy representation of black and women writers in these twenty-two books is also noteworthy. The English literature texts contained no black writers The fourteen American literature texts had very few black writers, as noted below.

Three texts had one black writer only, five texts had two black writers only, three texts had three black writers, one text had four black writers, one text had five black writers, and one text had six black writer. When one thinks of the lengthy list of black writers in the NCTE book, *Black Literature for High School Students*, by Barbara Dodds Stanford and Karima Amin, the count above seems even more dismal.

A similarly discouraging representation of women writers, both in the English literature texts and in the American literature texts, is reported by Weathersby. Over half of the women writers who were included appeared only *once* in these twenty-two books. That included such writers as Edith Wharton, Jane Austen, Flannery O'Connor, Charlotte Bronte, Doris Lessing, and many others.

It is likely that similarly edited and quietly censored books are in use through out the United States. Readers of this report should examine their own texts to see to what degree they parallel the kind of bowdlerized, white male-oriented,

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bland materials reported in Tennessee.

Publishers and Teachers

It is clear that there are serious problems in the relationship between the users of books--teachers, librarians, and readers--and the publishers of books. Book publishing has become a growth industry; one publisher buys up another; nonpublishing companies have purchased publishers. Increasingly, these companies have little respect for traditional attitudes toward literature or interest in the user.

Rarely can a teacher or librarian who has censorship problems with a book expect help from the publisher. When a teacher in Wisconsin had serious problems with protests to the book *The Magician*, by Sol Stein, she attempted to call the publisher. Among other things that had happened was that selections from the book were copied and distributed anonymously around the town. The selections greatly distorted a book of considerable value. The teacher was never able to talk to any responsible person at the office of the publisher. Another problem was the fact that nearly all copies of the book disappeared from the libraries and bookstores in the region where this episode occurred. In response to this, author Stein offered to send one paperback copy of the book to any household in the school district that requested the book. The episode was very complex; it ended relatively successfully, from the standpoint of intellectual freedom. However, no credit can be given to the publisher of the book for the fortunate outcome of this censorship battle.

When a workshop was held in Washington, D.C., after the 1982 NCTE Annual Convention, to discuss the relationships between publishers and teachers, the main speaker in the plenary session panel who represented the publishing industry had two points in his presentation. He asked for writers to prepare better edited manuscripts, and for teachers to cease asking for so many desk copies. That is not atypical of the level on which publishers expect to deal with teachers.

Among possible actions by users is to ask NCTE, in its role as publisher and distributor, to consider making available full texts of those literary works now available only in expurgated editions through regular educational channels. Furthermore, regional publishers, such as Stanton & Lee in Madison, Wisconsin, and their parallels across the country, offer more personalized and helpful ways of publishing. Users of books need to think about the problem of censorship and consider ways to combat it.

Another possible line of action would be a selective boycott. If a substantial number of teachers in the rest of the United States were to select one publisher who has kowtowed to the Tennessee market or the Texas market, and refuse to purchase any books by that publisher, perhaps some changes might occur.

Several Ways of Dealing with Censorship

1. Be prepared to defend yourself against the charge of "secular humanism." Develop a professional library.
2. Do the best professional job possible. The best professional job is easiest to defend against censorship. Try to cover all points in good professional preparation.
3. Make every effort to obtain a materials selection policy; ideally the policy would establish procedures that would include all interested members of your constituency--board members, administrators, students, teachers, librarians, etc.
4. Try to see that the procedures are followed. Be sure to follow them yourself.
5. Be sure to include the right of students to an alternate assignment--a recognition of the right not to read. It should be made clear that the right not to read does not mean the right to prevent other persons from reading.
6. Be sure to include a clause protecting academic or intellectual freedom in the bargaining contract.
7. Develop a procedure to be used when a citizen complains about a learning resource item. A procedure should be developed in concert with all interested parties.
8. The bargaining contract should require that the complaint procedure be followed by all agencies in the school or library.
9. Prepare statements of the rationale for using the most often censored items from the learning resource collection--books, films, periodicals, etc.
10. If a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the teacher or librarian, assistance should be sought from professional organizations. NCTE and the Intellectual Freedom Committee of ALA will offer advice. Call the NCTE office at Urbana, Illinois; ask for Charles Suhor (217) 328-3870; he will also recommend a local source of help.
11. See that your professional organizations join other groups in a coalition for the conservation of First Amendment Rights.
    a. Such a coalition should monitor legislation and send representatives to express judgments concerning bills proposed by the state legislature.
    b. The coalition should survey, at regular intervals, appropriate groups of professional persons concerning the degree of censorship pressure they are currently experiencing. Publish the results in newspapers and elsewhere as a means of making the public aware of the absurdity and dangers of censorship.
    c. Groups within the coalition should maintain liaison so that effective action may take place when specific cases of censorship occur.
    d. Such groups should be prepared to offer legal assistance when individual cases seem clear-cut and defensible.

When SLATE Members Make Their Positions Known . . .

by
Franklin D. Schlatter
SLATE Chair
(Vol. 10, #2, March/April 1985, pages 1 and 2)

Whenever the circumstances we encounter in our teaching become unbearable or even very undesirable, we who are involved with our professional organizations need to realize that something probably can be done to alleviate our problems. We should know that it is not enough to passively accept our "fate."

Chances are, for instance, that someone else has faced a similar situation and that a report on how the matter was resolved may be somewhere in print. And even if the difficulties were not completely overcome, proposed courses of action may very likely be in our professional literature, and we have but to adapt such data to our own case.

Of course, we in SLATE need also to recognize that we have an obligation to report on those problems we've experienced and have seen through to some kind of resolution. We should be willing to describe those difficulties we've had in our departments and districts; and, certainly, we should share with our colleagues what has been done by

professionals to resolve such problems.

A Case in Point

In the past year, the administration for my school district mandated that high school English teachers must assign a prescribed number of compositions to their students. The honors students were to write eighteen compositions a semester in other words, a theme a week; and at least six of these compositions were to be two or more pages in length. The middle track classes were to be assigned twelve compositions a semester, with at least three of them consisting of two or more pages.

According to the guidelines set forth at my school, *all student papers were to be marked by the teacher.* In addition, the papers were to be placed in student folders so that at the end of the semester the building principal could check to see that the writing requirements had been met.

It should be noted that none of the English teachers in my school was or is opposed to students being taught writing skills, or to assigning a number of writing tasks to them. But, as any knowledgeable English teacher would realize, all of us were soon buried under the paper load. The load was especially heavy for those of us who faced between 140 and 170 students a day. Indeed, no matter what level of students we taught, some of us found ourselves checking papers before school, during our preparation periods, during lunch, immediately after school, at home in the evenings, during the weekends, and at any other time when we could put the marks on the papers. Our lives became a treadmill of assigning papers, marking them, and filing them.

Immersed in the process unhappily immersed, I might add--I was confident that with all the time I was giving to the composition work of my students, I was meeting the requirements that had been imposed on my colleagues and me. But then, one day near the end of the semester, I decided to role-play my principal looking through the student writing folders. You can probably imagine my discomfiture when I discovered I had nowhere near the twelve papers mandated for my middle track students. As a matter of fact, in most folders I could count only seven or eight papers! Obviously, I had failed to meet the mandate.

I was crushed, and I could readily conjure up my building principal's voice saying, "Why haven't you been giving your students enough writing assignments?" Never mind all the lost hours for pep assemblies and picture taking and similar activities. Never mind the numbers of short stories and other literary works the classes were also expected to cover. Never mind that the teacher faced 160 students in five classes each day.

However, I couldn't help but mind all those factors! Why, I wondered, couldn't the principal and the other administrators see what the other English teachers and I were experiencing?

It was then that it struck me: *they had to be told, clearly told what they were asking for.* And thus it was that I wrote the following statement:

On Requiring English Teachers to Assign Composition Work

- Recognizing that the National Council of Teachers of English recommends that teachers of English should have four classes of twenty-five students each for a total of one hundred students . . .
- Recognizing that teachers' salaries are not predicated on the number of hours teachers are supposed to work on schoolrelated materials outside of school...
- Recognizing that the work all teachers do should be handled within the number of hours they are at school--that factors outside the school may forestall (indeed, *should* forestall) teachers from being imposed upon outside of the school day . . .
- Recognizing that English is a multifaceted subject that requires attention not only to writing but also to reading, researching, speaking, and listening activities . . .
- Recognizing that English classes are typically the ones from which students are taken for a variety of activities ...
- Recognizing that numerous school activities (pep assemblies, picture taking, interruptions, announcements) impinge upon the class day and shorten the amount of time allotted to teaching and to the preparation of lessons . . .
- Recognizing that the development of lessons requires time and effort on the part of teachers and that provision must be made for such an endeavor ...
- Recognizing that the use of teachers' aides is not always possible and therefore the handling of the paper work done by students falls to the teacher to grade, record, and file ...
- Recognizing that teachers of English are human and should be involved in activities that enable them to enjoy and express that humanity (whether the activity be reading, knitting, pursuing a hobby, participating in sports or theatrical productions', or engaging in social or church work) ...

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL OR OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SHOULD REALIZE THE FOLLOWING:

1. If a teacher spends only 5 minutes on a composition written by a student reading the paper, analyzing it for its content and its structure, and then marking it for each class of 35 students the teacher must have 175 minutes for that process alone.
2. A teacher with 160 students who spends only 5 minutes per paper must have at least 800 minutes, or a total of 13 hours, to read and grade each assignment.
3. A school which expects the teachers to assign ten papers per semester is therefore expecting at the least for teachers of English with 160 students to spend 133 hours per semester simply on the grading process for themes.
4. And even if a teacher has but *100* students, the grading of compositions at the rate of 5 minutes per paper, for 10 compositions, will take 83 hours in a single semester!
5. And 5 minutes per paper does not allow for much thoughtful consideration of all the factors that are involved in the development of a well-constructed composition!

Conclusion

In the interest of fairness and equity and with the intent of improving the composition work of students, those who establish requirements for such composition work should make suitable provision for ensuring that the expected work does not place an undue burden upon the teachers and/or that the teachers of composition receive just compensation for the added hours that the required work entails.

Franklin D. Schlatter

Chair of SLATE

Once the statement was completed (indeed, while it was still hot from the typewriter), I ran off enough copies for every teacher in our English department and all the administrators who were responsible for mandating the writing and for evaluating what was actually done in the classrooms. The copies were delivered immediately to all concerned, and immediately a wave of affirmation swept through the English department. The teachers' mood upon receipt of the document was that of prisoners whose heavy iron bands had been mercifully removed.

No, they had not yet heard from the administration. But they all knew that here was something they could focus upon. Here was a statement that each of them could at least use as a basis for discussing their own experiences with regard to the district's writing program. And because the statement was couched in strong, yet matter-of-fact terms, the department members felt that some changes in the mandate were sure to occur.

In the short time since the statement has been circulated through the district---as this report is being written for the SLATE newsletter, it was just two weeks ago--my building principal called upon the English department chair to find graders to assist with the paperwork, two graders were obtained, and members of the department have been requested to turn over papers to be scored.

A small victory! But it is hardly going to be enough, for improvement in student writing calls for more than marking student errors on their papers. To bring about improved writing the administration will have to change some of its priorities, a change which is not likely to occur quickly. The building principal is now checking student writing files from the first semester and voicing his concern over the weaknesses exhibited by the students in their papers. He worries about the lack of quality in the writing and wonders what else can be done to achieve improvement in student compositions. But when he is told that class sizes must be reduced so that students can receive individual help, he just shakes his head and cites budget restraints as barriers to such an eventuality.

In the meantime, though, an overwhelming silence is now being accorded the number of papers that students are to write each semester.

It is feasible, of course, that the silence presages a storm, and the administration will continue to mandate X-number of papers per semester from each student. Should that occur, members of SLATE will be receiving a follow-up report of the next set of actions taken to bring about administrative change in the matter, for such a mandate cannot continue. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the silence means something else: that the administration is thinking about seeking fair and equitable ways to improve student composition in our school and district.

As was suggested at the beginning of this article, though, other SLATE members must also be experiencing some problems in their respective jobs--and working on solutions to them. I'm convinced that the members of the SLATE network are interested in those political activities initiated by their colleagues to improve the lot of language arts teachers; and, as chairman of the SLATE Steering Committee, I invite you to share those experiences with the rest of us through the SLATE Newsletter.

Standing Committee Against Censorship
by
John M. Kean, chair
University of Wisconsin-Madison
(Vol. 12, # 3, November 1987, page 6)

In a parallel "trends and issues" report, this committee pointed to increases in censorship attempts at all levels of schooling, including efforts to censor not only what is taught but *how* it is taught.

The committee noted that the trend toward restricting access to information is seen in a passage from Federal District Court Judge Thomas Hull's decision in *Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools* (Tennessee). The judge declared, "The plaintiffs believe that, after reading the entire Holt (textbook) series, a child might adopt the views of a feminist, a humanist, a vegetarian, or an advocate of 'one-world government.'"

Committee members warned that rank-and-file teachers and librarians remain unaware of the seriousness of current threats to freedom to read, write, and learn. School administrators, school board members, and faculty in higher education are too little aware of their responsibilities regarding intellectual freedom, they said.

Baltimore Conference Resolutions
(Vol. 15, # 1, April 1990, pages 1 & 2)

The 79th Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, which convened in Baltimore last November [1989], passed six resolutions. Four of these request the support of affiliates to work with legislators and on legislation. [Editor's Note: We have included only the resolutions related to intellectual freedom here.]

On Students' Freedom of Speech and Press

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English urge state legislators, state departments of education, and local school districts to promote legislation protecting the rights of students in their exercise of freedom of speech and press;

that NCTE urge and assist its affiliates to promote legislation ensuring these fights; and

that NCTE urge all local communities and schools to ensure these fights.

On Identifying Authors of Instructional Materials

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English urge publishers to identify the actual authors of their instructional materials and to detail as fully as possible the contributions of consultants;

that NCTE urge all groups involved in the adoption process, particularly teachers and administrators, to demand that publishers identify the authors of instructional materials and detail the contributions of consultants; and

that NCTE urge educators to refuse to be cited as authors of instructional materials if they have not written a significant part of these materials.

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On Textbook Selection Procedures
RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English reaffirm that all book-selection decisions be based upon soundly developed criteria;
that NCTE urge those persons responsible for book selection to provide ample opportunity for all teachers to examine materials under consideration and give weight to their evaluations in making textbook selections.

Censorship Topic of SLATE Symposium and SLATE Workshop
(Vol. 15, #1, April 1990, page 2)

The 1989 Annual Convention in Baltimore saw the culmination of SLATE's year-long focus on censorship problems. Three speakers at the Sunday morning "SLATE Symposium: Cutting the Toes to Fit the Shoe-Hard Lessons from the Censors" discussed different aspects of the fight for intellectual freedom. Faye Gage, Darien High School, Connecticut, spoke on "Lessons from a Personal Involvement with a Censorship Challenge." "History of the Christian Right and the New Age" was the topic of J. Charles Park from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Roz Udow of the National Coalition Against Censorship, New York, New York, spoke on "The Courts and the Cases."

Discussion continued in the all-day SLATE Forum on Monday. NCTE Vice President and former Chair of the Standing Committee Against Censorship, James E. Davis of Ohio University, Athens, spoke, recounting challenge after challenge against intellectual freedom. SLATE Steering Committee consultants brought the discussion to local issues as attendees shared their experiences. All present brainstormed methods for coping with censorship attempts.

SLATE Advises NCTE to Sign *Amicus* Brief
From *Council-Grams*, Nov./Dec. 1990
(Vol. 16, # 2, November 1991, page 2)

A group of teachers in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, California, including NCTE member Calvin Tucker, challenged the district's 1987 change in policy regarding the use of film in the classroom. In their case, *San Ramon Valley Education Association, et al. vs. San Ramon Valley Unified School District*, these secondary teachers argued for using certain films in their classrooms for educational purposes. The group of English and social studies teachers involved had included in their curricula films such as *Apocalypse Now, Das Boot, The Verdict, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, The Breakfast Club, El Norte, and Danton.*

Prior to 1987 the district had allowed its teachers to use an "R" rated film for educational purposes so long as each student in the class obtained parental permission, or if each student had a right to "opt out" of the film presentation without adverse consequences. At the beginning of the 1987-88 school year, the San Ramon Valley Unified School District changed its policy regarding the use of film for educational purposes. The new policy stated that only "G" rated films could be used and that "R" and "X" rated films could never be used. Any film rated between "G" and "R," i.e., "PG-13," could be used at the discretion of and with the permission of the building principal, "depending on criteria including but not limited to violence, nudity and unacceptable language." In 1989 the 1987 policy was amended to include all unrated films that "contain adult-type materials respecting language, violence, nudity, sexuality, theme, drug use, or other content."

The teachers won the initial trial on the grounds that the Motion Picture Association of America's film ratings are not based on educational content. However, the school district decided to appeal the verdict. The lawyers in the case suggested that NCTE and the California Teachers of English (CATE) might want to join others on or initiate an *amicus* brief.

SLATE Steering Committee Chair Marlene Corbett and SLATE Region 8 Representative Bob Infantino were contacted. Bob suggested that CATE's SLATE and Legislative Representative Ken Lane, who lives in Oakland, CA, where the ACLU lawyers for the teachers involved in the case have their offices, talk the case over with them. After doing so, Ken reported that Margaret Crosby of the Northern California ACLU felt that the importance of the court's decision for the plaintiffs would be its setting of a precedent limiting "the latitude that school boards have in setting curriculum policy, at least to the degree that they must do so responsibly and on educational grounds." Ken recommended to Bob that NCTE enter the case "to whatever extent feasible, up to and including filing its own *amicus* brief" in support of the teachers. Bob, in turn, has recommended that, to best serve the membership of the Council, NCTE file its own brief. Ken also recommended at their September meeting that the CATE Executive Board join the ACLU of California on a separate *amicus* brief. NCTE filed a brief in support of the San Ramon Valley teachers.

Amicus Briefs, Censorship, and NCTE
From *Council-Grams* Nov./Dec. 1990
(Vol. 16, # 2, November 1991, page 2)

NCTE's participation on *amicus* briefs in support of intellectual freedom is not a new idea. Best known, perhaps, is the support NCTE gave to plaintiffs Steven and Frances Pico in their case against the Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School, in 1979. In this case NCTE supported intellectual freedom by denying the right of the Island Trees school system to remove books from the school libraries and to prohibit the books' use in the school curricula "because the books contained passages which offended their conservative philosophy." The result was a 51-14 ruling by the Supreme Court in favor of the plaintiffs on the grounds "that school boards do not have unrestricted authority to select library books and that the First Amendment is implicated when books are removed arbitrarily." (Henry Reichman, *Censorship and Selection* [ALA, 1988] 123-124.)

In 1988 NCTE joined others in signing a brief of *amici curiae* supporting the reversal of the verdict in the case of *Monya G. Virgil, et al. vs. School Board of Columbia County*, Florida, et al. In this case the lower court had allowed the School Board to remove a textbook anthology of Western literature *(The Humanities: Cultural Roots and Continuities*, Vol. I) from the library because of objections to their content on the grounds of "bad language, sexually explicit story, promotion of women's lib." Unfortunately, the Florida Court of Appeals upheld the original verdict that the school boards'

removal of material from curriculum did not violate the Constitution as it was reasonably related to legitimate pedogogical concerns.

San Ramon Teachers Are Back in the Movies
From *Council-Grams* May/June 1991
(Vol. 16, # 2, November 1991, page 2)

The Contra Costa County Superior Court's decision stands. Now San Ramon English and social studies teachers will be able to continue using films such as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Das Boot, and Apocalypse Now* for educational purposes in their classrooms. In the June 1990 case, *San Ramon Valley Education Association, et al, vs. the San Ramon Valley Unified School District,* Judge Richard Patsey "held that adoption of a blanket rule prohibiting all use of [R-rated films], regardless of their content, the purpose for which the film was to be used, the class, the age of the students, etc. is in violation of the California Constitution."

At the beginning of school year 1990-91, though, the district film policy was still uncertain. In September 1990, the defending San Ramon Valley Unified School District appealed Judge Patsey's June decision. NCTE signed on an *amicus* brief in support of the teachers.

As the November 1990 election date approached, the San Ramon school board found itself in trouble. The school board was accused of not

> It is the policy of NCTE, in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified.

representing the citizens of the district in decisions such as the institution of the questioned film policy and its appeal to reinstate that district film policy, which was denied by Judge Patsey's June 1990 decision. District voters petitioned for the recall of two of the trustees and put up five new candidates for the board. After the November election these five new trustees replaced the entire San Ramon Valley Unified School District Board. This new board dropped the appeal in the film case.

Students of the San Ramon Valley School District are now insured access to films such as *The Breakfast Club, El Norte, and The Verdict* as they are used for educational purposes in their classes and provided the students obtain parental permission to view the films. Students still retain the right to "opt out" of viewing the films without penalty.

NCTE Takes a Stand against Censorship
(Vol. 16, # 1, June 1991, pages 4-6
Vol. 17, # 2, October 1992, pages 1-2)

Editor's Note: The following introduction has been edited to reflect that information from two issues has been combined. Additionally, the actions by NCTE described in the two issues have been combined; however, the date of each individual action is retained. Since September 1989, over 100 incidents of school curricular material being challenged have been brought to NCTE's attention. In each case NCTE has been asked to provide help in the form of information, advice, policy statements, rationales, testimony, or the filing of a legal brief. The following list separates the incidents according to how NCTE handled them. It also tells the date NCTE responded to the challenge, the location of the challenge, the person who brought the challenge to NCTE's attention, what was challenged, why the material was challenged (if known), and the result of the challenge (if known).

NCTE Signs on *Amicus* Briefs

9/90--San Ramon Valley Education Association, et al. vs. San Ramon Valley Unified School District (CA)--film use policy. School district didn't want "adult-type materials respecting language, violence, nudity, sexuality, theme, drug use, or other content" used in classrooms. CATE SLATE and Legislative Representative Ken Lane investigated case. Former film use policy retained and new district policy declared unconstitutional; entire school board replaced in election.

9/2/92 Woodland Joint Unified School District, CA People for the American Way (PAW). NCTE agreed to sign on to PAW' s suit, along with the National School Boards Association and ALA' s Freedom to Read Foundation, in defense of using the *Impressions* textbook series in Woodland's elementary schools.

NCTE Representative Meets with Those Undergoing a Challenge

1/28/91--Wheaton, IL--Review Committee-*Impressions.* Text challenged for containing witchcraft and sorcery. NCTE Executive Director Miles Myers spoke to school board on *3/6/91.* School board voted to retain series (undercurrents calling for an earlier-than-usual textbook adoption review and for teacher inservice on handling sensitive subjects in the classroom were heard, but such suggestions were not mandated by the board's decision).

1/22/90--Willard, OH--School District--*Impressions.* Text challenged for teaching the religion of witchcraft and for frightening and depressing children. NCTE Vice President Jim Davis investigated case. (NCTE provided a statement of support.) Challenging parents have dropped $1,160,000 lawsuit and are attempting to repeal a school tax levy that was passed in August 1990; these parents are supported by the former school board chair.

NCTE Sends Statement of Support to Those Undergoing a Challenge

5/17/91--Denver, CO--District Language Arts Supervisor--*Impressions.* Challengers object to certain stories. Complaint being handled through formal review process.

5/15/91--St. Croix Falls, WI--District Reading Specialist--*Impressions.* Challenged for promoting witchcraft, Satanism, and the occult; for not being supportive of parental authority; and for containing too much non-American literature. Challenge is being handled through the district's challenge policy.

4/17/91 Gardiner, ME --Curriculum Director--*Impressions.* Text challenged for teaching the occult and witchcraft and for being morbid. Complaint being handled through the formal review process. District uses text as a supplemental reader (curriculum is whole language) in grades 3-6 and owns copies of editions from the years 1986-90.

4/10/91--Boulder, CO--District Media Center Supervision -*Impressions.* Text challenged for teaching the occult and witchcraft and for being morbid and causing nightmares. Complaint is being handled through the review policy, and right now the review committee is being appointed. Text is only used in grades 4-6 and is a supplementary text (curriculum is whole language).

2/22/91--Plymouth, MN--Reading Consultant/Language Arts Coordinator--*Impressions.* Text challenged for teaching witchcraft and situational ethics. Formal review in progress.

2/21/91--Newport, OR--Director of Curriculum and Instruction-*Impressions.* Text challenged for teaching witchcraft, the occult, and symbolism. Formal review process begun.

2/6/91--Washnoe County (Reno), NV--English Language Arts Coordinator-*Impressions.* Text challenged for teaching the religion of witchcraft and for depressing and frightening children. School district voted to retain text for use in library (language arts curriculum is moving away from using textbooks to using "real" books), but a lawsuit, claiming that the textbook adoption policy was flawed, has been brought against the district.

2/1/91--Sioux Falls, SD--Supervisor, Language Arts--*Impressions.* Text being challenged for use of folktales, supernatural, witchcraft, Satanism, the occult, and anti-authority attitudes. Formal review process begun.

1/23/91--Idaho State Board of Education--Textbook Adoption List Vote--*Impressions.* Text challenged for witchcraft and for depressing stories. IRA Executive Director Peter Mitchell spoke to the state school board against censorship, including NCTE's position in favor of intellectual freedom. School board voted to retain series on state adoption list.

9/26/90---Pittsburg, KS--Librarian--Court Ruling on Materials Libraries Can Make Available to Patrons. Concern that the Supreme Court decision in the *Webster* case could prohibit libraries from mailing birth control information available to patrons. Chair of the NCTE Standing Committee Against Censorship, Jim Davis, gave the librarian a statement concerning the "slippery language" of the *Webster* decision.

NCTE Sends Packet of Information with Suggestion to Adopt Challenge Policy and/or Gives Advice to Carry Out Policy

2/7/91--Bountiful, UT--English Department Chair--*Grendel.* Book challenged for vulgar language and obscenity. School district voted to retain the book.

2/7/91--Ludlow, VT--Teacher--*Ragtime.* Book challenged for obscenity. Challenging parents failed to show up at school board meetings, so there is no formal complaint for the board to consider. Board is unanimously in favor of the students' right to read. BreadNet telecommunications bulletin board (Breadloaf) brought encouragement from several teachers for keeping the text.

2/7/91--Millersville, PA--Teacher--*Enoch.* Story challenged for implying a "drug high." School board voted to remove the story from the curriculum.

1/25/91--Klamath Falls, OR--Teacher--*Impressions.* Text challenged for use of witchcraft and for depressing stories. Three NCTE "support" pamphlets sent. School district reminded parents that the state of Oregon has an "alternative materials law" and that the school district has charge of choosing textbooks for its schools.

1/10/91---Oak Forest, IL--District English Supervisor--*Stranger in a Strange Land.* Book challenged for reinforcing sacrilegious and perverted ideas, encouraging suicide, and promoting the idea that man is God.

12/4/90---Blackwood, N J----Teacher----*The Red Pony, Ordinary People, The Chocolate War, Ten Little Indians.* Books challenged for vulgar language. (NCTE provided rationales, too.)

11/13/90---Machias, ME--District Librarian---*In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak.

11/12/90--Wheaton, IL--Teacher--*Impressions.* See Wheaton, IL, item in previous section.

10/26/90--Reno, NV--SLATE Rep--*Impressions.* See Reno, NV, item in previous section.

10/9/90---Enfield, CT--Librarian---*Meet the Werewolf.* Parent requested removal of book from library because of references to spells and fear that children would attempt to turn themselves into werewolves according to the descriptions of the process in the book. Review committee unanimously voted to retain book, and superintendent supported their decision.

10/4/90--Silver Spring, MD---Songwriter/Author--Barry Polisar. Books and songs challenged as unsuitable to use for educational purposes, for an emotionally disturbed student might misinterpret their satire as reality. Books, tapes, and performances are still under ban by Anne Arundel County schools, but Polisar performed at the Annual Easter Egg Roll at the White House, April 1991, and he will be receiving the Maryland Library Association award for his contributions in print, song, video, and performance to children.

10/4/90---New Orleans, LA--English Department Chair-- *Different Seasons, Presumed Innocent.* Language, inappropriateness for age group. Resolved between teacher, English department chair, and challenger; school is now writing book adoption and challenge policies.

10/4/90--Gainesville, TX--Teacher--Shakespeare. Vocabulary too difficult and inappropriate for middle school students.

10/4/90--Fairview, PA--Affiliate President--*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*

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9/12/90--Anacortes, WA--Citizen--*Impressions.* Textbook challenged for containing horror, death, and witchcraft. Series retained after review committee report affirmed that the texts are *secular and age* appropriate; teachers are urged to familiarize themselves with the review committee's report [a very thorough and well-done document]; teachers are to make every effort to provide a common educational experience for all children they teach; parents may request that certain materials not be used with their children, but the parent must negotiate with the teacher for alternative assignments, and the building principal will have the final say on the dispute; the school district will not provide a separate reading/language arts program for groups of students or parents because their beliefs do not coincide with the instructional materials or teaching strategies in use.

7/23/90--Farmington, NM--Librarian-- *Thirty-Six Exposures.* Book inappropriate for age level recommended because it contains explicit language and describes sexual encounters.

6/13/90---Berlin, MD--Librarian--Supervisors of instruction removing library books without following challenge policy.

6/13/90--Culver City, CA--Parent--*Little Red Riding Hood.* Text of book describes Little Red Riding Hood taking a bottle of wine to her grandmother and illustration in book shows the grandmother drinking the wine.

5/11/90---Dixon, CA--Teacher--*Impressions.* Text challenged for promotion of Satanism and the occult. Series retained with district refusal to take apart what district superintendent described as a top-notch language arts program; parents who objected to series were notified that their children were expected to attend school (lawsuit pending on this).

5/11/90--West Salem, WI--Librarian--*Why am I So Miserable If These Are Supposed to Be the Best Years of My Life.* "Group of irate parents are calling for removal of the book." Challenge resolved with compromise: library is for grades 4-8; book made accessible only to sixth through eighth graders; however, if fourth or fifth graders have parents' note on file, they can check out sixth through eighth grade books.

5/11/90--Houston, TX--Librarian--Judy Blume. No immediate problems, but wanted to be prepared in case some arose.

2/28/90---Meridan, CT--Librarian--*Sports Illustrated's* Swimsuit Issue. Principal removed issue from librarian's mailbox based on a "too sexy" video he had seen about what turned out to be the previous year's issue. Principal returned issue.

2/22/90--Cowansville, PA--Teacher--*Little Miss Christie.* Objections to psychic phenomena: ghosts and seance in play.

2/16/90--Landoff, NH--Teacher--*The Chocolate War.* A minister and his congregation challenged book for undermining moral fiber of children. School board decided to retain book in the ninth-grade curriculum and to offer an alternative reading selection for those who object.

12/7/89--Coeur d'Alene, ID Teacher--*Impressions.* Text challenged because adoption committee members previewed the Canadian editor and were assured by the publishers that the American edition they would receive differed only in its use of Americanized spellings; upon delivery the district discovered that the American edition contains literary selection not in the Canadian edition, including some controversial poems such as "The Lake" and "He's Behind Yer." The district chose to retain the series if the publisher would exchange the American edition for the Canadian edition originally ordered; the publisher obliged but, because of a community uproar, the district reversed its original decision and the new books are stored in a warehouse and are not being used.

11/10/89--Alta Loma, CA--Teacher--*The Dollhouse Murders,* challenged for references to the occult and the fact that the dolls come alive; *Where the Sidewalk Ends,* challenged because of the way death and religion are handled; *My Friend Flicka,* challenged for use of the word "damn"; *Little Red Riding Hood,* challenged because Little Red Riding Hood carries a bottle of wine to her grandmother and because an illustration shows grandmother drinking wine.

NCTE Sends Packet of Information Including Rationales or Material on Challenged Books

3/13/91--Eldersburg, MD--Teacher--*Gilgamesh.* Parent challenge epic for obscenity.

3/6/91--Fallon, NV--Librarian--*Romeo and Juliet.* Student charge that the play encourages suicide. Student offered *Twelfth Night* as an alternative assignment.

2/12191--Richmond, VA--English Language Arts Coordinator-- *The Chocolate War.* Book challenged for profanity, slang, and sexual allusions.

1/25/91--Salt Lake City, UT--AP News Service--*Grendel.* See Bountiful, UT, item above.

1/10/91--Dresden, OH--Teacher--A *Day No Pigs Would Die.* Challenged for language, a too-graphic portrayal of the killing of the pig, and description of the mating of the sow and the boar. (NCTE also sent policy materials.)

12/21/90--West Branch, MI--Librarian--One *Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.* Book challenged for profanity. Student was offered an alternative assignment.

12/5/90--Dayton, OH--Student--*The Catcher in the Rye.* No current challenge; student doing research on challenges against the book.

12/5/90---Eastford, CT--Teacher--*The Chocolate War.* Obscene language.

6/4/90--West Linn, OR--Assistant Principal--*The Catcher in the Rye.* Obscenity--alternative assignment offered to students, and no one chose to read another book; school ended and complaint "died a quiet death.

5/21/90--Whitesville, NY--Teacher---*Go Ask Alice, The Catcher in the Rye.* Books taught with permission of superintendent (no book selection policy). Students and parents were warned about possibly objectionable matter in books and offered alternatives; no alternatives requested. Superintendent was replaced mid-year and complaints about the books were filed with the new superintendent. Superintendent recommended the teacher's contract not be renewed.

4/30/90---Champaign, IL--Parent--*A Separate Peace*. Book challenged for reference to one of the character's having "made love to a girl" and objectionable language. School board voted to retain novel in curriculum.

4/25/90---Kenton, OH--Principal---*Of Mice and Men*. Objections to language.

2/6/90--Ten Sleep, WY--Teacher--*The Color Purple*. Book challenged for obscenity and incest scene. (NCTE also sent policy materials.) A series of meetings were held between February and June 1990, and in September 1990, the school board ruled that every teacher of every subject at every level would compile a list of all the instructional materials they use, that these lists would be updated yearly, and that these lists would be available upon request to concerned parents and citizens. *The Color Purple* may be taught as long as other books are available for the students to choose.

1/10/90--Camp Lejeune, NC--Director of Instruction--*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

10/18/89--Sandy, UT--District English Language Arts Supervisor-*James and the Giant Peach*. Book challenged for scene in which the worm slanders Mexicans. Issue resolved between principal and parent.

NCTE Sends Packet of Information
Don Robbins sends out an average of six packets per month during the school year--90 since September 1989.

4/22/91--Burlington, WI--Curriculum Director--wants censorship packet to "get prepared" for possible challenges (right now there are rumblings about the health and family life curriculum).

4/5/91--Paso Robles, CA--Student--for research on censorship.

4/5/91--Long Island City, NY--Student--for research on censorship.

4/1/91--Carlisle, MA--Author--for workshop on censorship.

3/25/91--Mission Viejo, CA--Student--for research on censorship against music.

3/6/91--Davie, FL--Student--for research on censorship.

3/4/91--Winters, CA--Librarian-doing research on *Impressions* cases; passed on information and resources.

1/22/91--Las Cruces, NM--Member--worry because of challenge against *Impressions* series.

1/4/91--Minot, ND--Student--for doctoral dissertation on censorship.

12/11/90--Puyallup, WA---Student--for research on challenges against intellectual freedom.

12/10/90---Bourbonnais, IL-District English Language Arts Coordinator--concern about challenges against *Impressions* series as well as against their Heath reading series. School board voted to retain Heath series; language arts coordinator suggested we work on developing an intellectual freedom network amongst schools to keep them informed of challenges against materials and of successful policies for book selection and review, etc.

10/30/90---Alexandria, MN--Librarian---for conference on censorship.

3/16/90--Riverside, CA--Librarian--establishing a policy and contacts.

2/2/90--Howland, ME-School District--for research, surveys on censorship challenges.

1/11/90--LaPorte, IN--Student--for research on textbook challenges.

NCTE Sends Statement of Support, Rationales if Available, and Packet of Information with Suggested Follow-up about Policy (if Necessary)

5/22/92 Salinas Union High School District, CA SUHSD English Steering Committee. NCTE wrote to protest needlessly restrictive aspects of the district's policy on use of videotapes, especially the requirement of review by the principal and the misapplication of industry ratings to school situations.

5/18/92 Fredonia, KS Teacher. "A Rose for Emily" (William Faulkner) was challenged for use of a racial epithet. Removed from curriculum during challenge. Review Committee recommended reinstatement; school board accepted recommendation.

5/14/92 Washington, IL Media Director. *The New Yorker* was challenged as inappropriate for use in high school classrooms; case will resume in autumn.

5/12/92 Costa Mesa, CA School Attorney. Spelling game "Wizards" was challenged for possessing images of violence and the occult. Board supported use of game; parent still pursuing removal of the game from the curriculum.

5/4/92 Mechanicsburg, PA Librarian. Language of *Bridge to Terabithia* (Katherine Patterson) challenged. Review committee ruled that the book would remain on the shelf.

4/7/92 Windsor, CT Teacher. *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in the-Moon Marigolds* (Paul Zindel) was challenged for containing profanity, alcohol abuse, and cigarette smokers, and for not treating a more uplifting topic. A group of teachers met to discuss the book's merit, offered rationale to the principal and a written report to the parent concerning why the book would remain in the curriculum. No further challenge.

4/7/92 Steeleville, IL Teacher. *The Color Purple* (Alice Walker) was challenged for containing profanity. Principal and the teacher met with the parents to discuss rationale for including this book. Parents understood and supported its use.

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3/27/92 Carroll County, VA Teacher. *The Floatplane Notebook* (Clyde Edgerton) was challenged for containing vulgar language. Challenger was supported by a local talk-show minister, resulting in a call for firing the teacher, principal, and superintendent. District responded by removing the book from the school. NCTE sent letters of support for teacher and for carrying the challenge through district' s review procedure. NCTE representative spoke at the school board meeting. Complainant has now submitted a challenge form to start book through procedure.

3/5/92 Massillon, OH President, Board of Education. *Blubber* (Judy Blume) was challenged for containing profanity, violence, and displaying disrespect toward parents. Board of Education removed all restrictions. Book remains on the shelf in elementary school library.

3/3/92 Old Mystic, CT Curriculum Coordinator. Numbers of books removed from library shelves by parents. Library staff reshelved books. Principal spoke with parents; no further problems.

1/29/92 Sidell, IL. *Catcher in the Rye* (J.D. Salinger) was challenged for containing profanity, prostitution, premarital sex, and alcohol consumption. Board of Education ruled to keep book on senior reading list, but teacher was requested to consider possible replacements.

12/10/91 Panama City, FL Assistant Superintendent. Requested NCTE reviews, rationales, and documentation for many challenged texts, including *I Am the Cheese* (Robert Cormier), for final resolutions of Panama City challenge case. Comprehensive policy developed by the district as a result of the challenge.

10/31/91 Webster City, IA Administrator. "The Lottery" (Shirley Jackson) was challenged in film and print versions for being "like Friday the 13th," and for assumption that a child is stoning a parent. Review committee ruled that the short story and the film would remain in curriculum and is planning to develop a comprehensive policy for all complaints about curriculum, library books, teaching methods, and other issues.

10/21/91 Mt. Vernon, WA SLATE Member. *Long Live the Queen* (Ellen E. White) was challenged for containing profanity. Board of Education ruled to keep the book; ruling being appealed by complainant. SLATE member and other anti-censorship leaders following the situation.

10/2/91 Brookville, PA Teacher. *The King Who Rained* (Fred Gwynene), children' s book which plays on homophones, was challenged for illustration of Daddy drinking beer. No formal complaint filed. Book remains on library shelf.

9/11/91 Meridian, ID--Education Association. The film *Glory* was shown despite district's policy that all PG, PGI3, and R films be shown only with permission of principal. Principal had not reviewed film. Complaint led to negotiations lasting over a year on many academic freedom issues. Many policies were developed protecting teacher' s rights and choices. Film policy has not been changed but will continue to be discussed.

7/19/91 Odessa, WA Teacher. Use of writing process instruction challenged because some student drafts contained profanity and sexual fantasizing. Following lengthy hearings, teacher was found "not guilty of immoral conduct."

NCTE Alerts SLATE Members/Affiliate Representatives in Field of Possible Intellectual Freedom Issue

9/7/92 Tulare, CA National Coalition Against Censorship. Award winning student film was held from release by school district because of profanities. Affiliate leader contacted teacher, who has the support of ACLU. Temporary injunction resulted in release of film; case continuing in courts.

2/14/92 Herrin, IL National Council Against Censorship. *Forever* (Judy Blume) was challenged as "inappropriate for teenagers to read." Review Board drafted a compromise including restrictions on the text and a policy for future use.

The first line of defense against censorship attempts is a policy to handle challenges. If your school and school district do not yet have a policy, now is the time to work on establishing one. The NCTE packet on censorship contains much useful information, including guidelines for the establishment of a policy for handling censorship attempts. To obtain a packet, write NCTE Censorship Packet, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

SLATE at the NCTE Convention
by David Fisher
Region 7 Representative, SLATE Steering Committee
(Vol. 17, #1, April 1993, pages 4-5)

SLATE was highly visible at the 1991 NCTE Convention in Seattle. The conference participant's first contact with SLATE was in the exhibit hall where a joint SLATE and Affiliates booth was staffed by representatives from both groups. The booth served the functions of making SLATE visible and giving NCTE members an opportunity to chat with their SLATE representatives.

If the booth was the scene of informal meetings, then the two sessions sponsored by SLATE were more focused.

The Sunday workshop looked at the theme "Free to Teach, Free to Learn" from a variety of perspectives. Jan Spaulding, who represents Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, the publishers *of Impressions*, talked about the series and the challenges to it. Jan showed examples of some of the illustrations and literary pieces used in the book and explained what objections had been raised against them. In a delicious moment of irony the lights in the convention center went out just as she held up an illustration of a pentagram. The powers of darkness seemed to be advancing.

Jan made two important points about the challenges to *Impressions*. First, often the individuals who challenge have not even looked at the material but get their (mis?) information from one of the organizations that are opposed to the series. Secondly, challenges to *Impressions* have not been upheld by the courts in general. Jan urged teachers to let the

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process work, and not simply to cave in when a challenge is hinted at. As long as a process is in place and has been followed, then it is probable that the courts will allow the series to be used.

Kermeen Fristrom, from the San Diego City School District, then discussed the dilemma of reform, because often it is when teachers change curricula or teaching approaches that challenges are made. Kermeen's advice was to do the right thing, adopt the best practice possible, and look for support. Reform can only come at the grass roots level, and so must be built, sustained, and supported at that level.

The session closed off with Bob Infantino's plea for teachers to teach values--such as honesty, promise-keeping, and respect for persons-through literature. Teachers should not avoid difficult issues, but use literature to examine them. Many of the ideals of American society are represented in literature, the power of which we should harness in this regard. Indeed, it is literature that often raises value-based questions that change minds and promote critical reflection.

The Monday all-day workshop was also extremely well-attended with almost one hundred people present at the beginning of the session. The audience seemed to enjoy the variety of presentations, all of which centered on the "Free to Teach, Free to Learn" theme of the conference.

Jean Brown started the day with an examination of what was meant by "politically correct," and by presenting the cases for and against the term. Those who argue for what is called politically correct claim it is a response to oppression, and work, as Jean Brown said, "to eliminate the thoughtless use of language." Proponents also argue that "politically correct language embraces rather than excludes."

The media seem to be the most fervent opponents of political correctness, which is often represented by the worst cases and by focusing on the implementation of political correctness rather than the concept. The politically correct are often accused of duplicity and hypocrisy by their opponents, who point out that, in demanding acceptance of diversity, the politically correct reject anyone who doesn't agree with them.

The discussion that followed was lively with some of the debate focusing on the origin of the term. Many people pointed out that the term was seldom, if ever, used in a positive sense; more often, it was used as a pejorative label of denunciation. One person pointed out that the term's force and the source of its power lay in the negative view Americans had of the word "political." If the term was "morally correct," then the term would imply approval rather than opprobrium.

Joanne Walen of Washoe County School District in Nevada led the next presentation with a case study of one district's response to a challenge of the adoption of the *Impressions* series. Joanne gave a detailed account of the case, which was typical in that the challenge was less against the content of the books--although that is the subtext of many of the complaints against the series--as against the process by which it was adopted.

The first essential point that Joanne made was that schools and districts should have an adoption process in place whenever the district or school adopts a book, and that they should stick closely to that process. The second point was that in dealing with challenges do not expect the other side to play by any set of rules. Joanne gave examples of how facts were distorted in order to support the challenge. The encouraging part of the presentation was that Joanne was able to offer a clear example of how to proceed with a textbook adoption, and, most importantly, tell a story about how a challenge had been won with support from the district.

The next session was led by David Fisher, who explored the difference between selection and censorship. David talked about the imperative to make a wide selection of literature available to students. School often is the only place where students have access to literature and ideas that reflect the diverse nature of North American and world society. Yet it is often difficult to find modern selections that would appeal to students, present a broad view of society, and not raise objections from censors.

Those in attendance were asked to review two poems and two short stories, all of which had been reviewed--and often rejected--by teachers for possible inclusion in textbooks.

David asked the groups that formed to consider under what conditions the group would recommend inclusion of any of the pieces in a textbook, or what reasons would they put forward for not recommending inclusion. The general discussion that followed the group discussion was lively, with a wide variety of viewpoints being put forward. The debate suggested that the line between selection and censorship is not always as clear as we might think. Certainly, there is no consensus view.

The last session saw Jean Brown lead the participants through an activity creating a process for adopting textbooks and materials, and with dealing with challenges. Jean distributed copious samples of various approaches and provided a framework for developing a procedure suited to the local situation.

The workshop ended with participants leaving with many questions but also with many resources and a great deal of useful advice.

Model State Legislation from NCTE–Fighting Censorship (Vol. 18, #1, April, 1993. p. 3)

Legislative action at the state level is vital to combat censorship and to reduce classes and teacher workloads to sizes that will enhance teaching and learning in our now overcrowded schools. NCTE has had a great impact in censorship battles at the district level. For decades, and in many school districts, NCTE's *The Students' Right to Read* has been a model for policies to democratically address book challenges. The ongoing work of SLATE, the Standing Committee Against Censorship, and other Council groups supports teachers in specific censorship cases.

But district policies work within the framework of state legislation on censorship and class size, which can have wide-reaching impact in districts, school buildings, and classrooms. Accordingly, last year NCTE, led by then-President James E. Davis, developed several new components for its political action program, among them the model legislation on censorship and class size. (See insets.) Workshops on introducing legislation have been held at NCTE conventions and affiliate leadership conferences, and actions to introduce bills are under way in several states.

Ken Lane, a former SLATE representative in California and long-time education activist in that state, has emphasized the need for concerted and persistent efforts in introducing state legislation ("Legislation and NCTE Affiliates," *Council-Grams*, November 1991). SLATE members are urged to contact affiliate leaders about SLATE legislative action. Technical and strategic assistance are available through SLATE and NCTE Headquarters.

Model for Bill on Book Challenges

The state of _____ requires that each local school board adopt some version of the Right to Read procedure of the National Council of Teachers of English. This procedure will require that each school board (1) have a complaint form which parents can use to file a complaint about the contents of a book which is required or optional reading in schools; and (2) have a complaint policy which provides for no change in optional or required books until a review has

been completed and the local board has acted. The local book review committee will have at least ten members and a majority of the members will be classroom teachers from the grades in which the book is used (1-2-3 or 4-5-6 or 7-8-9 or 10-11-12). The committee will have at least 20 school days to complete its review and to recommend to the local board whether or not to continue to list the book. Teachers will have the authority to decide whether a book is optional or required, and teachers may decide to list a book as an option for some students and as a requirement for others.

Copies of the reports of the review committee and the local board's action will be filed with the State Superintendent of Instruction. Teacher organizations may request copies of these reports.

Empowering Teachers–
SLATE Takes Action Against Censorship
by Charles Suhor,
Deputy Executive Director, NCTE
SLATE Staff Liaison
(Vol. 18, # 3, November, 1993, pages 4-5)

Censorship attacks the very heart of teacher power. Censors attempt to override teachers' judgments about instructional materials that are appropriate for students. Typically, a single protester or a special interest group seeks to usurp the rights of the entire student, teacher, and parent community by banning books entirely from a classroom, school, district, or state.

SLATE's continuing commitment to teacher empowerment includes concrete assistance in censorship cases. As SLATE's headquarters staff liaison, I receive and act on dozens of calls from teachers each year. I cannot claim that our efforts alone are decisive in combatting censors in these cases. But working with the embattled teachers, local leaders, and affiliates, SLATE provides letters of support, testimony, information, advice, and rationales for teaching of challenged materials.

The list below is a sampler of SLATE's action in censorship incidents that have occurred since the previous SLATE report (*SLATE Newsletter*, October 1992). The nature of the challenge, the location, the source who called the challenge to the attention of NCTE and SLATE, and the outcome of each case (if known as we go to press) are described.

***Santini* Still Great** *7/21/93--Guilderland School District, NY--A* central office leader reported a student's protest against Pat Conroy's *The Great Santini* at the high school level, based on alleged "Catholic-bashing" and violence in the book. A SLATE letter to the superintendent and board defended the appropriateness of the book. After an open hearing where the protesting student, the teachers involved, and others spoke, the nine-member board--which had read the entire book and all letters of testimony--unanimously rejected the complaint.

***Go Ask...* the Principal** *6/16/93--Buckhannon School District, WV--A* SLATE representative reported that the superintendent, because of a single parental complaint, summarily ordered removal of *Go Ask Alice* from a high school teacher's classroom, without a conference with the teacher, during a day on which she was absent. SLATE wrote a letter of protest to the board of education and to the superintendent. The board subsequently set up a policy for dealing with challenged materials, including the specification that the locus for decisions about supplementary instructional materials will henceforth be at the building level.

Board Backs Bradbury *4/21/93--Holland, ME-* A teacher and a parent expressed concern that the anthology *Best Short Stories: Middle Level* was protested by a parent because of alleged profanities in Ray Bradbury's story, "Sound of Thunder." SLATE sent a letter supporting use of the materials to the superintendent and school board. The board voted 18-3 to retain the book.

Attack on Classroom Library *4/19/93--Manlius, NY--A* university professor described a complaint against a high school teacher whose classroom library included an anthology in which appeared a controversial poem that one student photocopied and circulated-resulting in a demand to fire the teacher. SLATE sent a letter supporting the idea of classroom libraries that offer many choices for students and criticizing the protestors' attempts to dictate curriculum. The case is still unresolved and might require litigation if the board attempts to terminate the teacher's contract.

***Catcher* Retained** *4/12/93--Carlsbad, CA--A* high school teacher reported a parent's protest against *Catcher in the Rye*. Prior to the meeting of a review committee with the school board, SLATE sent a letter supporting the use of the book at the high school level and urging the board not to censor it for all students because of the preferences of individuals who wish to ban it. The committee supported the book; it remains in the program.

Blume is Restricted *3/29/93--Rib Lake, WI--*The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) reported that the principal of a high school had casually picked up a copy of Judy Blume's *Forever*, found passages that were offensive to him, and removed it from the school library without regard to district policies on the challenging of books. SLATE wrote to the president of the board of education protesting the arbitrary removal of the book. It is not totally banned but remains half-censored, that is, on a restricted shelf which requires parental permission for check-out.

Board Reverses Own Policy Violation *3/9/93-Marysville, KS--A* teacher was alarmed that numerous books written by Ken Follett might be withdrawn from a list of some 200 books provided for seniors enrolled in an international relations program. Violating its own policies and procedures, the school board initially removed the books in response to a small protesting group in an after-midnight meeting. SLATE wrote a letter of protest to the superintendent and board. The removal was reversed and the books returned to the shelf for use in the program.

Children's Book Retained *2/10/93--Stevens Point, WI--*A teacher educator was alarmed that the use of Lois Lowry's *Anastasia Krupnik*, a widely acclaimed children's literature work, was under attack from a group who found its values in conflict with their own views. A SLATE letter to the president of the school board urged that the book be retained. After hearing heated debates, the board voted to retain the book.

Holden and *Ordinary People* *2/1/93--Flemington, N.J.---*An English department supervisor expressed concern about a parent's attempt to remove Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* and the movie version of Guest's *Ordinary People* from the 10th grade English program. An overnight letter to the superintendent and a censorship packet were sent from SLATE. The school board voted to keep both the book and the movie in the program.

Shakespeare Survives *1/8/93--Beavercreek, OH--*When the use of the Zeffirelli film of *Romeo and Juliet* in a 9th grade honors English course was challenged--there is a scene involving nudity--a teacher requested support. SLATE wrote to the director of curriculum, who was opposed to the attempts to ban the film, encouraging its continued use. The school board voted to keep the film, requiring parental permission before students can view any film containing nudity.

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Board Upholds Newbery Winner *12/18/92--Radcliff, KY--A* media specialist reported that Paula Fox's Newbery Award winning book *Slave Dancer* was challenged and that thus far the school review committee, the principal, and the superintendent had supported retaining it in the curriculum and school library. SLATE sent a letter supporting the book and urging the school board to uphold the positive recommendations. The board did so.

***Of Mice* and Censors** *11/13/92--Vicksburg, MI--* A media specialist reported that a parent objected to inclusion of *Of Mice and Men* in the 9th grade English program. SLATE sent rationales for the book. SLATE's regional representative supplied further help and information. The board unanimously approved the recommendation of a book challenge review committee to retain the book in the English core curriculum but suggested that it be moved to grade 10. The SLATE representative made recommendations for improvement in district policy on protests and was subsequently scheduled to meet with the state media association to discuss censorship matters.

Lesbian Parents and Minister in Program *11/12/92--Meridian, ID* state affiliate leader **requested** help in supporting two teachers of a high school interdisciplinary program called 'The American Character.' They were suspended because, responding to their students' discussions of contemporary problems, they invited two lesbian parents to discuss their perspectives in the classroom and also invited a Protestant minister to offer another view. SLATE sent to the chair of the board of education a letter of support for the teachers' sensitive and evenhanded approach. The teachers were subsequently reinstated, and no complaint was placed in their permanent files.

***Grendel* Returns to Classroom** *10/2 7/92--Tuckerton, NJ--A* teacher of a 12th grade college preparatory class was under fire for using John Gardner's *Grendel*. SLATE sent a rationale for teaching the book and sent information about another challenge to *Grendel*, which was resolved in favor of retaining the book. A letter of support from NCTE/SLATE followed, and the board decided to retain the book.

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Part 2

First Amendment Issues

Teacher Wins Again in Role-Playing Case
(Vol. 5, # 5, May 1980, p.2)

In a case stretching back eight years and involving teachers' rights of free speech in the classroom, a Texas teacher, Janet Cooper, has been awarded damages, attorney fees, and reinstatement. Cooper, a nontenured teacher, was let go in 1972 after parents reacted angrily to a racial role-playing exercise she used to teach post-Civil War history. Cooper sued. The Fifth U.S. Circuit Court decision upheld a lower court's ruling in favor of the teacher, saying that "classroom activity is a protected activity" under the First Amendment. The Kingsville school district is asking for a rehearing, contending that reinstatement and seven years' back pay is "a disproportionate remedy." The case is *Kingsville Independent School District v. Cooper. (Education Daily*, March 10, 1980)

Smitherman Comments
on Black English Decision
(Vol. 5 # 5, May 1980, page 4)

In the March 10 *People* magazine, linguist and NCTE member Geneva Smitherman, Wayne State University, discussed the 1979 U.S. District Court decision which called for recognizing black English as a legitimate ethnic dialect distinct from standard English. She explained that this decision does not mandate either the teaching of black English to students or treating black students differently from whites in teaching standard English.

Rather, "the judge ordered that the *teachers* be taught about black English ....A teacher just has to know where a student is coming from.. Teachers felt the kids were inferior because of the way they talked. For instance, a child might be reading aloud and' Pronounce the word 'more' as 'moe.' The teacher corrects him, but in the kid's mind he got it right--that's the way it's pronounced in black English. He may mimic the teacher and say 'more,' but then he's confused and afraid he didn't recognize the word." Faced with enough of this correcting, Smitherman commented, "the child turns off, becomes nonverbal, listless. A bright, creative kid can become a behavior problem.... "

Shouldn't the black student learn standard English Pronunciation? the interviewer asked Smitherman.

"Yes," she said, "but it's a drastic mistake to start when the child is just trying to master the fundamentals of reading and writing. The ability to 'code switch,' or change speech patterns in response to social context, is very sophisticated. In language development, a child doesn't become aware of social context until about age 12 or 13 ."

Smitherman described the Ann Arbor cases as "pointing up the intersection between race and class." Middle-class blacks, who make up most of the 13 percent black population in that city's King Elementary School, have picked up code, switching early from their parents, who are adept at it. "These kids learned the two languages simultaneously. But if you're black and poor, you don't have that advantage ...."

"Creation Science" in Schools: Potential Landmark Decision
(Vol. 7, #2 March 1982, page 1)

National attention focused recently on a federal courtroom in Little Rock, Arkansas, where the first case to test the constitutionality of teaching biblical creationism as science in public schools was argued. Judge William Ray Overton's decision struck down the state of Arkansas' new law on science curriculum, which had prompted the lawsuit. The judge found creationism to be religion and ruled that its teaching violates the principle of separation of church and state set forth in the Constitution.

Through the controversial Arkansas Balanced Treatment for Creation Science and Evolution Science Act, passed by the legislature in 1981, Christian Fundamentalists had sought to require science teachers who teach evolution theory to treat the biblical account of creation as a scientific theory and give it equal time. Two weeks of testimony in the case *(McLean v. Arkansas Board of Education)* centered on the scientific merits of the two theories. Arguments revealed the dimensions of the current struggle between defenders of the principles of scientific inquiry and advocates of traditional, religion-centered culture. While the trial specifically concerned science classes, it has implications for teachers of English, who deal with modern literature which often contradicts traditional religious doctrines.

Highlights of the Decision

Judge Overton's 38-page decision rejected testimony that the above constitutes true science. "A scientific theory must be tentative,...' he noted. "A theory that is by its own terms dogmatic, absolutist and never subject to revision is not a scientific theory."

Judge Overton specifically rejected the "equal time" provision of Act 590, observing that "The two-model approach ¥ . . is simply a contrived dualism which has no scientific factual basis or legitimate educational purpose. It assumes only two explanations for the origins of life .... It was either the work of a creator or it was not." Act 590, Judge Overton noted, is nearly identical to a model legislative act developed by Paul Ellwanger of Citizens for Fairness in Education, based in Anderson, South Carolina. Judge Overton observed in his opinion that Ellwanger "is trained in neither law nor science," and quoted extensively to illustrate his point that "Ellwanger's correspondence on the subject [of scientific creationism]

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'shows an awareness that Act 590 is a religious crusade.'

'Judge Overton measured the Arkansas law against the U.S. Supreme Court's three-part test for separation of church and state and found it wanting on all counts,' *Education Daily*. y reported January 6. 'Under the High Court's 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* test, a law must have a secular purpose, neither advance nor inhibit religion and create no excessive government entanglement with religion.' The judge concluded that 'the only real effect of Act 590 is the advancement of religion.' Judge Overton said, further, that in trying to monitor compliance with such an act, the state would inevitably become entangled with religion.

Advocates of separation of church and state, who have warned that further struggles over religion and the public schools lie ahead, suggested that the Overton decision will be a valuable resource for them. American Civil Liberties Union attorney Robert Cearley told *Education Daily* that 'Judge Overton dealt with the very essence of creation 'science'' rather than simply 'mechanics of implementation' of the Arkansas law. (NYT: 12/11, 17/'81, 1/6/'82;WP: 12/1 /'81; ED: 1/6; EW: 1/12/'82, *including text of decision)*

Fallout from Arkansas Case: More Pressure on Educators
(Vol. 7, # 2, March 1982, Pages 1-2)

'The court challenge of an Arkansas law that defines creationism as a science has done more than focus on what most scientists consider a silly issue,' Fred Hechinger wrote in the *New York Times* January 5. 'It has exposed the vulnerability of the public schools to noneducational political pressures.'

Several speakers at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, then taking place in Washington, D.C., openly acknowledged those pressures, said debating with creationists is fruitless, and told science educators they will have to learn to 'use standard tactics of American politics' such as lobbying, writing letters to the editor, and distributing literature, to build public support for the position on public school teaching of their discipline. The scientist's spirit of continued inquiry and openness to honest doubts about 'details of the evolutionary process' is not understood by the general public and too often is used against scientists in public debates with creationists, the speakers warned.

A Failure of Education?

Writing recently in the *New Republic*, Niles Eldredge, curator of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, traced the revival of creationism as an issue to 'prior failure to educate our children about science-how it is done, by whom, and how its results are to be implemented.'

Discussing the Arkansas trial in *Education Week* (January 12) Steven Luxemberg said, '... interviews with Arkansans from all sections of that diverse state also show that the creationist issue seems to trigger the American sense of fair play. Over and over again their response is the same: 'It seems only fair to present both sides.'

'Of course, science doesn't work on a fairness doctrine; it works on a merit system,' said American Civil Liberties Union attorney after the trial.

On to Other States

Creationists' campaign for what Crawford described as 'indoctrination in their mores' shifts now to Louisiana, which last July enacted a law calling for 'balanced treatment to creation-science and to evolution-science' in texts, lectures, and library materials 'taken as a whole.' Again, a group of teachers, clergy, and parents have joined in an ACLU-sponsored suit charging not only that the law (again drafted by employees of a creationist organization) establishes religion, but also that creationist groups will profit from it by selling their textbooks to the Louisiana schools.

On January 5, the same day the Arkansas decision against creationism was announced, the Mississippi State Senate voted 48 to 4 in favor of a creation science bill for schools in that state. *Legislative Review* reported December 14 that although the Oklahoma legislature killed an equal-time-for-creationism bill last fall, a similar bill has been introduced in Maryland; another has been prepared in Georgia.

Distorting the Substance

The creationism bills, Fred Hechinger noted in his commentary, differ from mandated driver education, for example, in that instead of simply reducing the time teachers can spend on academic subjects, they 'distort the substance of education.' Distortion of biology texts in response to creationist pressure has already been detected. Writing in the *Christian Science Monitor* December 10, Julia Malone noted that 'Gerald Skoog, professor of secondary education at Texas Tech University, has made a careful study of science texts' coverage of evolution and finds it shrinking.'

Now, a new high school text, *Experiences in Biology*, from Laidlaw, avoids all use of the term *evolution*. Discussion of natural selection (evolution) in a Prentice-Hall text, *Biological Science*, appears only in the last few pages. Mel Gabler, co-founder of a Texas-based text-watchdog group, told the *Monitor* that he was pleased that three new junior high texts make little mention of evolution. 'Your origins have to be based on somebody's philosophy, somebody's religion,' he said.

A Threat to Teachers

Stanley L. Weinburg of the Iowa Academy of Sciences reported at the recent convention of the American Association of the Advancement of Science that 'In one Iowa school district, the president of the school board calls in each new biology teacher and says something to this effect: 'You have every right to teach evolution if you wish-but not in this district if you want to keep your job.'"

Science teachers in DeKalb County, Georgia, dug in their heels in the face of a threatened school board mandate for the teaching of creationism. According to Wayne Moyer, executive director of the National Association of Biology Teachers, they threatened to resign if the board passed the rule, and the board backed down. Moyer, who represented NABT in testimony in the Arkansas trial, warned in comments to the *Monitor* that if creationists begin winning battles for equal time, 'Competent science teachers are going to be questioning whether they ought to stay in science education.'

Commenting on the potential effects of legislating content of science education, geneticist Francisco Ayala of the National Academy of Science told the Arkansas court that a Soviet mandate some years ago to teach Lamarckian biology in the schools 'put the Soviets back 30 years in biology . . . they have still not caught up.' (NYT: 1/5; CSM: 1/11; ET: 1/12/ '82; ED: 12/4, 22; WP: 12/9; Ed USA: 12/21/'81)

Supreme Court Decisions in Cases Affecting Education
(Vol. 7, # 2, March 1982, page 2)

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled recently that juries in obscenity cases need not be certain "beyond a reasonable doubt" that a book, magazine, or movie is obscene before suppressing it. The ruling, Fred Barbash reported in the *Washington Post* December 1, "will make it easier for state and local governments and judges to move against what they consider obscene material." The unsigned ruling, which three justices dissented, could be significant in future cases involving freedom of expression. The case in question involved an effort to ban pornographic films from a Santa Ana, California theater. The issue on which it was appealed turned on whether, in a civil rather than a criminal suit, the stricter standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt"-was required. The California Court of Appeals contended it was, because of the First Amendment issue involved. Dissenting Justice John Paul Stevens said he was distressed that his fellow justices thought otherwise and attached too slight importance to the question to grant it a argument. Justices William J. Brennan and Thurgood Marshall also dissented on grounds of the importance of First Amendment issues.

The Supreme Court ruled in December that student religious groups are entitled to hold worship services on the property of public schools and colleges. In 8-1 ruling against the University of Missouri at Kansas City, the justices cited the obstruction of rights of free speech ruling would result from barring such groups from worshipping on public property. The university had claimed it could support religion by condoning services. "The University's argument misconceives the nature of this case," Justice Lewis Powell wrote for majority. "The question is not whether the creation of a religious forum violate the [First Amendment] Establishment Clause. The University has opened its facilities for use by student groups, and the question is whether it can now exclude groups because of the content of their speech." (ED: 12/8/'81)

Other Supreme Court Actions
(Vol. 7, # 3, page 4, May, 1982)

In recent actions, the Supreme Court declined to review an appeals court decision that the local school board in Guilderland, New York, was justified in refusing to allow religious meetings of Students for Voluntary Prayer in high school classrooms. The high court thus drew a distinction between activities in public schools and public colleges. In a similar case brought by the University of Missouri at Kansas City, it ruled that student religious groups could exercise free speech by worshipping in campus buildings. The justices noted that college students are young adults. Affirmed an appeals court ruling that a Louisiana law allowing a five-minute morning prayer session as part of the public school schedule is "predominantly religious" in intent and therefore unconstitutional.

Maine Book Ban Ruling Gains National Attention
(Vol. 7, # 3, November 1982, page 5)

A Vietnam doctor's book about his war experiences, banned by school officials in Baileyville, Maine, was returned to school library shelves in February by a federal court. Judge Conrad K. Cyr issued a preliminary injunction reinstating the book *365 Days* by Ronald Glasser. Judge Cyr's opinion is likely to be quoted often as censorship controversies continue. He said in part, "Public schools are major marketplaces of ideas, and First Amendment rights must be accorded all 'persons' in the market for ideas, including secondary school students."

Cyr said students have a right, under the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution, to read *365 Days*, despite its four-letter words, and that "arbitrary official standards of ... taste" should not be imposed on the student body. Individual parents, the judge allowed, could tell the school to deny their own children the book they wished.

Wayne Reilly, reporting for *Education Week* (Feb. 2), wrote that "Although the injunction is preliminary and Judge Cyr did not rule directly on the merits of the case, his opinion delves unusually deeply into substantive issues, including broad constitutional questions about students' rights.

"Judge Cyr said it is impossible to draw a line between a book's words and the ideas it conveys. He said there would be 'irreparable injury to the [student] plaintiffs if the book is not returned immediately to the shelves, and that the board action probably violated the First and 14th Amendment rights of students. He cited criteria that school board members should use when banning a book so that the procedure will not violate the due-process rights guaranteed students under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution."

Judge Cyr also said in his opinion that "The social value of the conceptual and emotive content of censored expression is not to be sacrificed to arbitrary officials standards of vocabulary tastes without constitutional recourse." He classed "information and ideas in books placed in a school library by proper authority" as "protected speech," and stated that school board members' opinion that some words in *365 Days* are "objectionable" does not prove the book is obscene or "could harm children."

Conference Explores Current Conflict about Education
(Vol. 7, # 3, May 1982, pages 5 & 6)

"Public Schools and the First Amendment," a conference featuring debates and discussions on the proper content for public education in the United States, attracted over 460 persons to the Indianapolis Downtown Hilton Hotel April 20-21. The meeting focused on a range of current problems involving individual rights, separation of church and state under the U.S. Constitution, and public attitudes about the proper education of United States youth. On the program were educators, clergy of various faiths, lawyers, parents, and representatives of groups both opposing and advocating censorship of school materials and course content.

Questions such as these were debated: "Resolved, That public schools are teaching the religion of Secular Humanism"; "Resolved, That values clarification courses destroy home-taught values"; "Resolved, That sex education should not be taught in the public schools"; and "Resolved, That consciousness-raising to eliminate racism from children's

books is not censorship." Other speakers dealt with topics such as these: "The New Right: Threat to Democracy in Education"; "How Textbooks Affect Today's Youth"; "The Communist Threat in the Public Schools"; "The Student's Right to Know," and "Curriculum Censorship: The Actors and the Interests Involved."

Among the program participants were Dr. Kelley Seagraves, director of the Creation Science Research Center, San Diego; former U.S. Senator Birch Bayh; Wayne Moyer, director of the National Association of Biology Teachers; Janet Egan, co-founder of Parents of Minnesota, Inc.; Bishop James Armstrong, United Methodist Church, president of the National Council of Churches; Terry Todd, national chairman for the Stop Textbook Censorship Committee of Eagle Forum; Barbara Parker, director of the Schools and Libraries Project, People for the American Way; Murray Norris, author of *Weep for Your Children;* and Robert O'Neil, president of the University of Wisconsin.

Edward B. Jenkinson of University, co-director of the conference commented that the meeting gave educators and others a view of the breadth and depth of the conflict facing Americans in the coming years, over content of public education. "We realize that a tremendous amount of work is going to have to be done by both before there can ever be any progress toward mutual understanding," Jenkinson said. "One teacher said she and her colleagues had laughed about past statements by members of the New Right because they couldn't believe those people were serious. She told me 'I'm leaving here trembling and no laughing.'" Defenders of the First Amendment, Jenkinson said, face "a long, long road ahead" and man obstacles. "Professional organizations must do more than they have to get together, and examine these issues and present position statements on them."

Leona Blum, NCTE staff liaison SLATE, who attended the conference, called it a good beginning for a statement of the issues that now confront local educators. In the controlled format that was necessary in the limited time of the conference, she said, "People talked past each other because of the strong feelings involved. There was time to say, 'What can we do? How can we meet the objections raised against public education and still have education in and for a democracy?' We all need to focus now on what the restrictions sought by the New Right would mean in the classroom. We need to think about what it would mean to abolish the safeguards that now protect who disagree with the majority."

The Indianapolis conference was sponsored by Indiana University's School of Continuing Studies, the School of Education, and Phi Delta Kappa. Tapes of conference sessions are available. Write for an order form to Phi Delta Kappa, Eighth St. and Union Ave., Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

Author Terkel Speaks Up, Defends Book against Censors
(Vol. 7, #3, May 1982, pages 5-6)

In Girard, Pennsylvania recently, an English teacher's assignment of readings from Studs Terkel's book *Working* to a vocational education class produced a censorship clamor. By March, Terkel, who at the invitation of school officials had visited the town to discuss his book and academic freedom with high school classes and school board members, appeared to have won his point. The Girard school board voted unanimously to uphold teacher Kay Nichols' curriculum decision.

The confrontation began when some students refused to read the assigned selections, charging they included objectionable language. Linda Burns, leader of a parent group which opposed the assignment, was quoted in the *New York Times*, Feb. 3, as saying that *Working* conveys "a distorted view of the working world" and that she would like to see it "banned from the district." Later she told *Education Week* the parents merely wanted an alternative assignment for those who objected to *Working*. She characterized Terkel's book (a collection of interviews with working people) as "blasphemous," including "objectionable words and explicit sex scenes... offensive to Catholics," and adding that "the book itself is mostly negative.... There are only a couple of stories where people are happy in their jobs."

Said Terkel of the protestors, who are hard-working townspeople: "The exquisite irony is that they are the heroes and heroines of this book." (EW: 2/24; AP, NYT: 31241'82)

The Attack on Humanism
by
Sheila Schwartz
(For the NCTE/SLATE Steering Committee on Social and Political Concerns)
(Vol. 5, #9, October 1980, pages 1-2)

What is Humanism?

The American Humanist Association (Seven Harwood Drive, Amherst, New York 14226) defines Humanism through a series of statements by prominent humanists. Among them are the following:

> Humanism... is the expression of the human gift for undogmatic inquiry and for rational thought.
>
> -Jacob Bronowski

> Humanism is a rational philosophy...a philosophy of service for the good of all humanity, of application of new ideas of scientific progress, for the benefit of all humankind.
>
> Linus Pauling

> Humanism is a philosophy of joyous service for tihe greater good of all humanity in this natural world and according to the methods of reason and democracy.
>
> --Corliss Lamont

The Humanist movement was founded in 1933 by educator/ philosopher John Dewey along with R. Lester Mondale and thirty-two other leading thinkers of the day. Its function has been to provide concerned human beings with an acceptable alternative to the traditional religious imperatives which are rooted in supernaturalism, mysticism, and miraculism. Humanism offers the reasoned view that human beings alone shape their own destinies, leaving to scientific inquiry the probing of nature's unknowns in the endless search for truths, knowledge, and facts.

In addition to its nontheistic religious posture, Humanism has taken positive affirmative stands often in the vanguard --on such compelling issues as Constitutional separation of church and state; enhancement of ethical and moral values in business, politics, religion, and society generally; the insanity and immorality of war as an instrument for settling

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inter-nation differences; a d numerous other pressing problems of national and global significance.

Who Are Some Well-Known Humanists?

In earlier years there have been Margaret Sanger, heroic birth-control pioneer; Sir Julian Huxley, first Director General of UNESCO; Dr. Brock Chisholm, first Director General of the World Health Organization. Today there are Erich Fromm, Buckminster Fuller, A. Philip Randolph, Margaret Kuhn, and Dr. Jonas Salk.

The Attack on Humanism

The House of Representatives on May 12, 1976 enacted by a vote of 222 to 174, with 36 abstentions, an amendment to a section of the National Defense Education Act. The amendment, introduced by Congressman John Conlan, R-Arizona, would have prohibited any "grant, contract, or support... for any educational program, curriculum research and development, administrator-teacher orientation, or any project involving any aspect of the religion of secular humanism."

Fortunately, this bill was not passed in the Senate. However, it epitomizes the struggle by forces of the right to turn the philosophy of humanism into the religion of "secular humanism" And the schools are the battleground for this struggle.

Paul Kurtz, editor of *The Humanist Magazine*, September October 1976, further explained the situation at that time: The action of Congressman Conlan... is not an isolated incident, but is part of a coordinated effort by the evangelical right. Already there are several taxpayer suits pending in the courts that claim that secular humanism is being taught as a religion in the public schools. The assault has taken various forms in recent years: the censorship of textbooks (as in West Virginia), the objection to the teaching of evolution in the schools, opposition to sexual education criticism of social science courses such as MACOS ("Man: A Course of Study"), a cross-cultural anthropological study of a primitive Eskimo culture, and so on. The evangelical right apparently would have us return to a narrow Babbitt-like view founded in Biblical verities and absolutes *(pro ecclesia* and *pro patria)*. They would, if their campaign succeeds, exorcise the scientific and humanistic curricula from the schools. (*The Humanist*, September/October, 1976)

In the same way that everything right-wingers opposed during the McCarthy era was labeled "red" or "pink," everything that seems to threaten the *pro patria* and *pro ecclesia* of today's fundamentalists is labeled, "humanistic." And no school area is exempt.

In March, 1980, the Arizona State Education Committee attempted to outlaw sex education. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Marge Ollson, D-San Manuel, said that the main objection to sex education is its humanistic approach to morals, and she defined Humanism as "an anti-God, anti-U.S., anti-family religion that hopes to take over the world." (Phoenix Arizona *Republic*, March 12, 1980)

A brochure distributed to school systems at $8.00 a hundred entitled, "Is Humanism Molesting Your Child?", is available from an organization called the Pro Family Forum, P.O. Box 14701, Fort Worth, Texas 76117. This brochure accuses Humanism of the following sins:

Denies the deity of God, the inspiration of the Bible, and the divinity of Jesus Christ.
Denies the existence of the soul, life after death, salvation and heaven, damnation and hell.
Denies the biblical account of creation.
Believes that there are no absolutes, no right, no wrong -that moral values are self-determined and situational. Do your own thing, "as long as it does not harm anyone else." Believes in the removal of distinctive roles of male and female.
Believes in sexual freedom between consenting individuals, regardless of age, including premarital sex, homosexuality, lesbianism, and incest.
Believes in the right to abortion, euthanasia, and suicide.
Believes in equal distribution of America's wealth to reduce poverty and bring about equality.
Believes in control of the environment, control of energy and its limitation.
Believes in removal of American patriotism and the free enterprise system, disarmament, and the creation of a one-world socialistic government.

This same brochure says that Humanism is being inculcated in the elementary and high schools by Pavlov's conditioning theories which "were developed under Lenin and Stalin." A major technique, the brochure continues, used to accomplish this conditioning, is Values Clarification, which tells the child that there are no absolutes. "Other Humanistic strategies for behavioral change are role playing, whereby the child acts out emotional situations such as conflicts with parents, also magic circles, value appraisal scales, questionnaires, diaries, journals, public interviews, etc. Survival games and open-ended situations of "What would you do if... ?" develop situation ethics, to say the least."

Specific Danger to English Teachers

As was explained above, many of the techniques used to develop writing skills, i.e., journals, diaries, values writings are considered part of the Humanistic plot. But a major focus for the attack is the book.

"Is Humanism Molesting Your Child?" with its subtle subhead, "Let's Protect Our Families from Child Molesters," warns that "Films, textbooks, and library books frequently contain Humanism and provide excellent opportunities for open 'honest' discussion which includes teacher pressure and peer pressure."

When Congressman Conlan introduced his bill, he waved a copy of *The Humanist* before the House and claimed that it bragged that "humanism is alive and thriving in the secondary schools." Paul Kurtz wrote, "What he was referring to was an article by Sheila Schwartz (Jan./Feb. 1976) in which she reviewed adolescent literature in the schools. Had he bothered to read the review, he would have found she was using the term humanism broadly to refer to various forms of literature read in the schools...that is, literature that deals with common human themes and problems."

It is because the anti-Humanist forces attack what is at the heart of the English curriculum, that is, literature and writing, that all English teachers must be aware of the nature and meaning of the struggle and join together to fight this bigotry which threatens the very basis of our pluralistic democratic society.

Warning that this could signal the beginning of a new tyranny over the mind of man, Kurtz reminds us that the majority of more than two million schoolteachers identify with the Judeo-Christian tradition whereas the official membership of humanistic groups is only a small fraction of the total. "Moreover," he states, "the organizational activities of secular humanists have no role in the schools; hence they are in no way leading to the establishment of a religion."

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Secular Humanism: Some See It as Threat to Schools
(Vol. 6, # 5, September 1981, pages 1-2)

In the wake of the conservative political victory last fall, citizen watchdog groups have stepped up their demands for narrower definitions of appropriate subject matter for public education, public entertainment, and the public prints. The protesters, concentrated mostly in small towns and white suburbs, have rounded national, regional, and local groups, of which the Moral Majority and the Eagle Forum are the best known. The titles of the new citizens' groups-among them Pro-Family Forum, Young Parents Alert, People Concerned with Education, and Guardians of Education convey righteous determination. Their messages express alarm. They warn that the quality of American life and even American power in the world are deteriorating because of the spread of "secular humanism," which protesting groups see dominating the public schools. They charge that today's youth are taught that "anything goes," and that there is no such thing as "right and wrong."

The citizens' groups describe secular humanism as a religion. Since religious teaching is prohibited in public schools, it follows, in conservative logic, that secular humanism (and humanists) should be barred from classrooms. A number of the new groups have ties with evangelical Christian organizations. As a result of court decisions in recent years, Christianity no longer enjoys its former status as the *de facto* religion of many public schools. Some of the protest groups contend that the framers of the U.S. Bill of Rights never intended that the nation's children be brought up officially godless.

Semantics and the Protest Groups

The language these citizens' groups use to characterize secular humanism implies subversion and conspiracy. "Those of us who understand know how it is infiltrated, know how it is inculcated in the children," Terry Todd of a Minnesota group told *New York Times* writer Dena Kleiman. Todd's organization, calling itself Stop Textbook Censorship, asserts that traditional school reading such as *The House of the Seven Gables* and *Robinson Crusoe* have been "censored" from the schools and replaced with "humanist" literature. "Is Humanism Molesting Your Child?" is the title of a pamphlet from another group. Other titles: "Weep for Your Children" and "Anti-God Humanists Are Conditioning Your Children." "Brainwashing," "negativism," and "socialism" are other terms used to describe the humanist "threat."

"There is a philosophy called humanism, which places man at the center of the universe, encourages free thought and scientific inquiry without deference to a supreme being and offers no absolute standard of ethics," Kleiman notes in her article. She quotes philosophy professor Paul Kurtz, State University of New York at Buffalo, as saying the citizen groups have seized on humanism because they seek someone to blame for current social ills.

"There is an uneasy feeling that maybe we've bent over backwards with being broadminded," Scott Thomson, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, commented in the *Times*.

What the Activists Want

The new activists' remedy for the schools calls not only for abolishing sex education and for teaching biblical creationist theory along with evolution theory, it also calls for removing literature dealing with present-day problems and realities, downplaying creative writing, and stressing spelling, penmanship, and phonics. Some such critics fault the schools for reducing competition among students. The concept of the American system as already perfected in some unspecified past time spurs attacks on social studies texts in particular. The Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association reports sharp increases this year in pressure to remove specific books from schools and libraries. One teacher of English told the *Times* she worried about how her son will learn to evaluate conflicting ideas if all controversial content is sifted out of the curriculum.

Some of the New Right activists also want to sweep liberal thinkers out of government. According to *Newsweek* July 6, Tim LaHaye, San Diego minister and founder of the conservative Council for National Policy, states in his book *The Battle for the Mind* that "We must remove all humanists from public office and replace them with pro-moral political leaders."

A flurry of interest in the summer centered on a campaign by the Coalition for Better Television (CBTV), a group connected with the Moral Majority, to promote a consumer boycott of products sold by firms advertising on shows featuring sex and violence. The boycott was canceled, but not before executives of the sponsoring companies traveled to Memphis to confer with Coalition leaders. "All we're asking for is a little balance in programming," a coalition spokesman said.

The Rev. Donald Wildmon, director of the Coalition for Better Television, has stated the issue more bluntly: "Somebody's value system is going to be in dominant control."

Marketing Freedom of Expression

Television producer Norman Lear and others have responded to conservative pressure groups by rounding a counter-group, People for the American Way (PAW). It has produced TV public service announcements advocating freedom of expression and, according to executive director Anthony Podesta, is attempting "to counter the intolerant messages of moral majoritarians and the negative climate they created."

PAW-sponsored TV spots score the conservative groups for implying that those who disagree with their views are not "good Americans, good Christians," etc. In one PAW message, a steelworker says that he considers himself and his family to be religious but can't accept the assertions of "a whole bunch of ministers on the radio and TV," who would class his wife as a bad Christian for disagreeing with them on some political issues.

The first PAW messages were broadcast in more than 30 television markets last fall. Podesta says 50 million viewers saw them and "tens of thousands of people responded with contributions and offers of assistance." PAW launched its second media campaign this past summer. According to Podesta, the organization's other projects include talks to community groups, debates with opponents, monitoring and responding to "moral majoritarian" activities, and "citizen action training programs... to combat censorship in our libraries and intimidation in our schools and other public institutions."

The Moral Majority, Inc. announced in late July that it will counter TV commercials by People for the American Way with its own 30- and 60-second spot announcements featuring the Rev. Jerry Falwell and another Moral Majority official. (WP: 7 25/'81)

Is Moral Teaching Constitutional?

A report by the Thomas Jefferson Research Center noted recently that in 1775 (when the American colonies were still under British rule) 90 percent of the content of school reading concerned religion and morals. If demand for moral teaching escalates, how might such content be accommodated in public schools under the U.S. Constitution? Mark Cannon, an aide to Chief Justice Warren Burger, recently quoted a statement by a new Values Education Commission in Maryland, saying the commission had found "nothing in court decisions that would preclude the teaching of ethical content." (NYT: 5/17, 7 5; CSM: 629; USN&WR: 6 8; ET: 7 6'81)

Sources of information for stories in this issue are abbreviated as follows: AAHEB: *American Association for Higher Education Bulletin*. AP: Associated Press. CHE: *Chronicle of Higher Education*. CSM: *Christian Science Monitor*. CUNG: *Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette*. DI: *Daily Illini* (University of Illinois). ED: *Education Daily*. EdUSA: *Education USA*. ET:

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Education Times. EW: *Education Week.* HENA: *Higher Education and National Affairs.* LR: *Legislative Review.* NYT: *The New York Times.* PDK: *Phi Delta Kappa.* USN&WR: *U.S. News & World Report.* WP: *The Washington Post.*

Secular Humanism: A False Charge
by
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(Vol. 12, # 2, July, 1987, pages 2 and 3)

The charge that teachers in the public schools advocate a nebulous religion labeled secular humanism is clearly false. This charge originated in publications of right-wing foundations and has been publicized by such critics of the schools as the Gablers of Longview, Texas. A recent group repeating the charge calls itself Christians for Excellence in Education, or sometimes Citizens for Excellence in Education. This group circulates Gabler material and repeats the charges found in such books as Tim LaHaye's *The Battle for the Mind* (1980).

Some critics of the public schools offer the publications and ideas of the American Humanist Association as their "hardest" evidence that the schools teach secular humanism. These critics charge that this small organization, with its 3,000 members, controls the thinking done and the literature used in the public schools. Such critics as LaHaye assert that the characteristics of secular humanism are:

1. Disbelief in God
2. Belief in evolution
3. Rejection of absolute morals
4. Defication of humankind as supreme
5. Belief in the innate goodness of people to govern the world equitably

The ideas of the American Humanist Association are, in fact, quite irrelevant to the empirical realities of the public schools, with their teaching ranks comprising a mixture of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Moslem, and non-church members-a mixture, further, of military veterans and non-veterans, older teachers and younger teachers, men and women. To argue that all teachers agree with the American Humanist Association on all points because some teachers agree with the AHA on certain points is to fall into the logical fallacy of the undistributed middle (see Fig. 1).

The History of Humanism

LaHaye also asserts in *The Battle for the Mind* that "modern humanism began with the Greeks... and was revived by St. Thomas Aquinas in the twelfth century" (p. 132). There are very few Catholic supporters of the so-called religiously based criticism of the public schools who would agree that Thomas Aquinas consciously or unconsciously taught a disbelief in God. This charge reflects the exclusive and sectarian position of the right-wing critics. Only *they* have the correct religious and correct Christian views, seemingly. The term "Christians for Excellence in Education" has itself implications that are at least very unpleasant and at worst devastating for our pluralistic society. Why should any one group, particularly one that has a very narrow and exclusive definition of Christianity, have control over what is taught in the public schools?

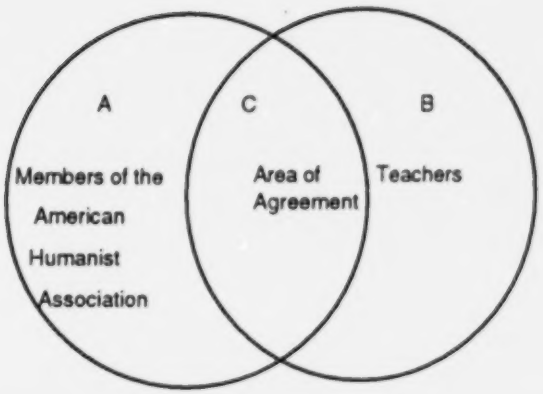

Figure 1. Logical fallacy of the undistributed middle, or guilt by association

A: All Members of the AHA Believe in:	B: Some Teachers Believe in:	C: Fallacious Conclusion:
Equal Rights for All Persons	Equal Rights for All Persons	All Teachers Are Humanists.
Teaching Sex Education	Teaching Sex Education	
Teaching Evolution	Teaching Evolution	
Teaching Values Education	Teaching Values Education	
Avoiding Censorship	Avoiding Censorship	
Self-Reliance	Self-Reliance	

Critics or censors select one meaning out of several and insist that in all contexts and situations they have the correct meaning. In point of fact, at least six different definitions of humanism are listed in dictionaries and encyclopedias. For example, the fact that there is a Christian humanism, as explicated in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, is either unknown to these critics or plainly denied by them as even a possibility-thus indicating their ignorance and intolerance.

Humanism as a philosophy of education originated in the efforts of a group of priests who were interested in developing the best possible curriculum for the new world of the Renaissance. These priests developed a curriculum based on the Judeo-Christian tradition which they represented, together with complementary ideas and materials from the rediscovered worlds of Greece and Rome. These clergymen took for granted the reconciliation of faith and reason developed by St. Thomas Aquinas, who joined Aristotelian rationality with the revelation of God contained in the life of Christ (Forbes 1967, pp. 224-25).

The curriculum devised by these clergymen included grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and esthetics. This curriculum complemented the older scholasticism, which had stressed logic, or dialectical metaphysics, and natural philosophy, which was "one of the seed beds of modern science" (Ong 1967, p. 216).

These priestly scholars, with others, collected manuscripts-Greek, Latin, Hebrew-and arranged for translating the Greek manuscripts into Latin and for publishing the translations. The great libraries of Europe, especially the Vatican Library, began at this time. One of the important contributions to education was the development of cataloguing and indexing by these priests and scholars. And along with these activities came the problem of intellectual freedom in the library: in 1506, the priest Pfefferkorn attempted to have Hebrew manuscripts destroyed; another priest, Reuchlin, argued successfully that it was necessary to protect and study Hebrew manuscripts to understand the Old Testament.

Among the themes developed in the new curriculum for church-operated schools were (1) freedom; (2) naturalism (man as part of the natural world-which is related to the Calvinistic doctrine of common grace); (3) history, in the modern sense of the word; (4) religion as the basis of the correspondence between the heavenly city and the earthly city; (5) tolerance of "the fundamental unity of all the religious beliefs of mankind and therefore of the possibility of a universal religious peace"; and (6) science, the belief "that man... can understand nature with the tools that nature supplies to him, that is, with the senses" (Abbagnano 1967, pp. 70-72). (It is noteworthy that these themes are the ones objected to by seven parents in Hawkins County, Tennessee, in October 1986. The public schools in that county were found guilty of violating the religious fights of the parents by requiring their children to read materials that illustrated the themes listed above. The case has been appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit at Cincinnati. SLATE contributors will certainly want to follow this case because of its considerable significance for the public schools.)

The English humanists of the early sixteenth century permanently influenced education in the English-speaking world. Included in this group were William Grocyn, professor at Oxford, (c. 1446-1519), John Colet, dean and founder of St. Paul's School at London, which was a model and seedbed for education in English; and William Lyly, first headmaster of St. Paul's School. Colet and Lyly collaborated with Erasmus on a Latin grammar which is described as "the most influential of all English textbooks" (Brooke 1948, p. 328). Also important were Sir Thomas Elyot and Sir Thomas More.

Humanism as a philosophy of education came to the New World in many ways: through the ideas of Luther and Calvin, those of other Protestant churchmen, and the influence of St. Thomas Aquinas in Catholicism. The colleges founded by the various denominations relied heavily on the humanistic tradition for their basic curriculum. In like fashion, the universities founded in the New World, based on Cambridge and Oxford, were another source for the transmission of the humanistic tradition. These American schools complemented the traditions kept alive in the churches. We may properly argue about details and applications of the humanistic tradition, but to deny its origin in the Renaissance joining of Greek thought in all its complexity and variety with the powerful traditions of Judeo-Christian thought, in all of *their* complexity and variety, is to deny history itself.

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The tradition of the curriculum designed for the fully human being, which the Renaissance clergy devised, remains as the single most influential tradition in Western education. The term "humanistic" accurately describes this tradition. "The humanities" is a term used in the contemporary world for those materials and courses that keep alive the humanistic tradition. To object to this tradition is to oppose the heart and soul of the intellectual tradition of the Western world. To object to that tradition is to object to the ideas that our greatest thinkers have advocated as essential for the education of the citizen in a democratic republic.

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What Could Happen If School Prayer Amendment Passes?
(Vol. 7 # 5, September 1983, pages 2 &3)

Discussion of the implications of President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment to allow prayer in public schools continued in June after the amendment was introduced by Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.). Senate Joint Resolution 199 reads: "Nothing in Constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions. No person shall be required by the United States or by any State to participate in prayer."

After analyzing the amendment, Justice Department told Congress that if the amendment passes, school officials wanting to include prayer among daily activities could write nondenominational prayers themselves or choose prayers according to the wishes' of parents, teachers, students, and the community. They could also authorize Bible readings in schools.

Supreme Court decisions from the 1960s banning such activities would fall. So would the high court's opinion that even voluntary prayers amount to subtle coercion of nonconforming students. School boards would have to allow groups to conduct prayer sessions on school property, a practice that has been prohibited by the courts.

University of Texas law professor Grover Rees, who wrote the amendment text, said it would be up to local school administrators to avoid offending members of diverse religious faiths. American Civil Liberties Union attorney David Landau said the proposed amendment would in fact repeal the First Amendment rule prohibiting establishment of religion. Landau predicted that local religious majorities would dominate prayer selection and "confusion and interreligious struggles and competition" would result. (ED: *6/2/82)*

Responding to the Religious Right

by
Jean E. Brown
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(Vol. 12 # 3, November 1987, p. 1-2)

Religious Right Uses Constitution to Infringe on Others' Freedom

Today as we reflect upon the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, it is appropriate for us to reaffirm our commitment to that document, especially to the First Amendment, which articulates the freedoms upon which our society has grown and flourished. The Constitution ensures that all Americans have freedom of choice and expression. It provides for diversity and the right to disagree. Many constitutional scholars and civil libertarians have affirmed that the strength of the freedom in this country is that it applies equally to everyone. A serious challenge to that premise of freedom occurs when individuals or groups wish to amend others' freedom of choice, thought, and expression while claiming to be protecting their own.

In the period since World War II, there have been two such periods of serious challenge to basic freedoms. The first occurred during the early 1950s when Joseph McCarthy and his followers used the United States Senate as a platform for their attacks. The second challenge is happening today as the leaders of the religious right use their pulpits to condemn their opponents. Although the forums are different, there are many similarities between the tactics, posturing, and beliefs espoused by the leaders of the religious right today and those of Joseph McCarthy and his followers in the early 1950s. Members of both these groups have traditionally wrapped themselves in the Constitution, claiming they seek only to preserve and protect the liberties of our democratic way of life while condemning and accusing those who disagree with them. The rallying cry of McCarthy and his followers was to rid the free world of the red menace; today the radical right seeks to eliminate any suggestion of secular humanism. In both cases, these groups claim to seek to preserve our way of life and to secure freedom for those who ascribe to their beliefs.

Our liberties are, as they were during the McCarthy era, under assault by accusation, innuendo, and attack. The rallying cry of the right wing is the charge of secular humanism, a rubric for any view that does not support fundamental doctrines. The Christian fundamentalists sadly have found a voice in the U.S. District Court's Judge W. Brevard Hand,

whose blatant disregard of the First Amendment has interrupted the education of thousands of students in Alabama and beyond. Although Hand's ruling to ban certain textbooks was overturned, he has launched a long and difficult battle throughout our court system. These battles are costly and almost inevitably acts of futility because of the unconstitutionality of such rulings. By the simple length of the litigation, these cases are highly disruptive to the learning process. But the religious right appears to view delaying tactics as initial victories.

The irony of our times is that the religious right uses the rights provided by the Constitution to abridge the rights of those who disagree with them. The latest claim that the schools and certain textbooks infringe upon *their* freedom is specious and convoluted. Frequently, the complaints come from "concerned parent groups" who seek to dictate curricula and select textbooks according to a narrow conception of the world. They wish to eliminate all texts and teaching materials that allow students to make choices and decisions about issues. In essence, what they seek to do is to infringe on the freedom of the rest of the population while claiming to protect their freedom. But it is they who seek to limit a free flow of ideas.

Fundamentally, this country was founded on beliefs that ensured, among others, the freedoms of speech, press, and religion. American education has, at least theoretically, long been the bastion for the free exchange of ideas. An inherent goal of our schools must be to create opportunities for our youth to become thinking people able to make intelligent, informed choices. We live in a dynamic society; we must educate our youth to accept and to meet the challenges of change. The simplistic practices and views of any reactionary group should not dictate the direction of this country.

The history of Western civilization is rife with examples of zealots using religion as a shield for abuses. The Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and even the Third Reich sought to silence those who deviated from a particular concept of religious and/or ethnic purity. Today the methods are different, more outwardly peaceful. The religious right does not seek to destroy its enemies, but only to destroy their freedom of thought. Today's target is the schools, and the victims, in the short term, are countless children and young people. In the long term, society in general will be victimized by a generation that has been deprived of the ability to think and make intelligent choices.

This country was established to provide a haven from religious tyranny. As we face the current challenge to that principle, it is time to reaffirm our belief in freedom for all citizens, regardless of their beliefs. Thinking people must be willing to take strong positions and fight any attempt to abridge our liberties. The schools cannot exist to serve the biases of a vocal minority; yet a danger inherent in the actions of the religious right is that their claims are so absurd and their reasoning is so convoluted that it is difficult to take them seriously. As long as there are judges who support their cause, financiers who bankroll their propaganda, spokespersons who extol their position, and parents who harass the schools, the danger is real and must be faced. These religious fundamentalists will not fade away. They will use every avenue to advance their cause. Complacency is their greatest ally.

Teachers need to take positive action to respond to the challenges posed by the religious right. The following steps provide an initial course of action for teachers:

1. *Be informed.* Find out who the leaders of the religious right are in your area and explore their potential impact on state and local officials. Also obtain the position papers and other literature from groups that espouse concern for improving the schools. Determine what the agendas of these groups are and be ready to respond to them.
2. *Readiness is crucial.* Be prepared to respond to attempts to control the curriculum and the selection of reading material. Teachers need to develop well-articulated rationales for every unit they teach. An invaluable resource for English teachers is *Rationales for Commonly Challenged Taught Books*, edited by Diane P. Shugert for the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English and available from NCTE. This book is helpful in two ways: first, it provides support for twenty-five books that are often part of the English curriculum; and second, it provides a helpful model for teachers to develop their own rationales. Teachers need to be prepared to respond to complaints and charges; a lack of preparation puts teachers at a disadvantage. Teachers should never allow accusations and charges to make them defensive.
3. *Be proactive rather than reactive.* Teachers need to be good public relations people. Let the community know what is happening in your school. Communicate regularly with parents and establish an environment for support. Communicate with elected officials about educational issues. Write letters to the editor of your local paper, making sure that your perspective is known. Don't wait to have to respond to charges.
4. *Know your community.* One reality of the latest round of assaults by the religious right is that no community is immune from attack. Even communities that have had a long history of support for the schools are prey to a vocal minority who can disrupt quality education.

We must be alert to the potential destructiveness of the religious right; we must be ready to take action to counteract their intrusion into the schools. We must act now to encourage students to think and to make intelligent choices. We must reaffirm that the schools are the most powerful transmitters of the cultural values, beliefs, and freedoms upon which this country was established. We must make it clear that we will not pander to a minority who seek to control us and future generations by imposing on us a narrow perspective of the world.

Censorship: Implications for the Student Press: The Relativity of Freedom

by
Jean E. Brown
Saginaw Valley State University Saginaw, Michigan
(Vol. 13 # 1, September, 1988, pages 1 and 2)

On January 13, 1988, the United States Supreme Court signaled once again that those rights provided by the First Amendment to the Constitution do not apply equally in our society. The Court sanctioned the right of public school administrators to censor student publications. Speaking for the majority in the 5-3 decision, Justice Byron White said: "A school need not tolerate student speech that is inconsistent with its 'basic educational mission' .... School officials may impose reasonable restrictions on the speech of students, teachers' [sic] and other members of the school community."

The decision was prompted by a case filed by Hazelwood, Mo., East High School students against their school principal when, in 1983, he, without consultation with the student newspaper's editorial board or faculty advisor, removed two pages from an issue of the paper that dealt with teenage pregnancy and divorce. His claim was that the publishing deadline made it impossible for him to consult with the paper's staff to request a revision. Both articles were feature stories; therefore, they could have appeared in a later issue of the paper, but (according to the students who filed suit) the principal refused to discuss his decision with them. The staff of the Hazelwood *Spectrum* annually publish a policy statement that was tacitly approved by school officials. Furthermore, the School Board affirmed: "School-sponsored student publications will not restrict free expression or diverse viewpoints with the rules of responsible journalism." School

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policy was openly violated by the school principal when he decided to censor the *Spectrum* because he felt, without apparent consultation, that the articles were "inappropriate, personal, sensitive, and unsuitable." Justice William Brennan characterized the principal's actions as "unthinking contempt for individual rights [that] is intolerable from any state official. It is particularly insidious from one with whom the public entrusts the task of inculcating in its youth an appreciation for the cherished democratic liberties that our Constitution guarantees."

In isolation, this ruling is dangerous and destructive; however, it cannot be viewed as a singular act of the Court. In the past three years there have been two other decisions that have also spoken to the issue that students do not have the same constitutional rights as adults in this country. Last year's decision giving school principals the right to discipline students for using "lewd" language during a school campaign speech, and the 1986 decision allowing school officials to search student lockers without a judge's warrant, combined with this latest issue, speak to an ongoing, systematic pattern. The Supreme Court is establishing a dual system of rights in this country. The Hazelwood decision affirms this duality: "A school must be able to set high standards for student speech that is disseminated under its auspices--standards that may be higher than those demanded by some newspaper publishers or theatrical producers in the 'real' world--and may refuse to disseminate student speech that does not meet those standards."

The minority opinion was written by Justice William Brennan, in which he was joined by Justices Thurgood Marshall and Harry Blackmun. In an eloquent dissent, Brennan said that the school's principal had "violated the First Amendment's prohibitions against censorship of any student expression that neither disrupts classwork nor invades the rights of others." Fundamentally, there are two disparate perspectives about not only the rights of students, but also the nature and purpose of education in this country expressed in the ruling and the dissent.

The Hazelwood decision strikes an ominous blow to the whole issue of the essential purpose and value of education as it is conceived in this country. The expression, the "basic educational mission," is so fraught with ambiguity that it is open to capricious interpretation. In this decision, the educational mission can be seen as the preservation of the school principal's perspective at the expense of fundamental journalistic tenets. In the dissent, Justice Brennan said: "When young men and women of Hazelwood East High School registered for Journalism II, they expected a civics lesson." The purpose of education is, at its most fundamental level, to help students to develop their minds, to become thinking people. Our schools should provide students with the opportunity to learn about those principles that will prepare them for meaningful active membership in society; however, if their learning is contradicted by the actual practice that they have in school, then the lesson is meaningless. We will create a generation of students who are cynical and disaffected by the dual system of rights that the Court established by the Hazelwood decision.

Censoring Student Newspapers Hurts Education

by
Scott McNabb
Grand Rapids Junior College Grand Rapids, Michigan
(Vol. 13, # 1, September, 1988, page 2)

When the Supreme Court voted 5-3 to limit the constitutional rights of students who write for student newspapers *(Hazelwood School District versus Kuhlmeier),* I was shocked.

I'm an English teacher, really. I was thrown into the service of newspapers and the inverted-pyramid style of writing thirteen years ago when the high school where I taught lost its journalism/newspaper advisor.

"Moved to Australia," I heard someone say in the teachers' lounge, when asked what happened to the previous advisor.

Nobody, of course, wanted to teach journalism. Certainly, nobody wanted to advise the student newspaper. Except me.

Moved to Australia, huh, I thought to myself. Don't suppose it had anything to do with... Naw, couldn't be.

Anyway, that's all passed and now I teach journalism and advise the student newspaper at a community college. As an English teacher, I've come to regard the student newspaper as one of the most successful writing assignments I've ever seen. That's what bothers me about this Supreme Court ruling. The school newspaper provided students with one of the best educations available. Why? It was real.

Now, it's likely the student newspaper will become like a lot of the rest of the school day--an exercise. Cerebral sit-ups. Something you learn today, not because it's valuable today, but because it's good for your tomorrow.

The censorship case began in Hazelwood, Missouri, in 1983. Three student writers for a high school newspaper sued their principal, Robert Reynolds, for eliminating stories from the student newspaper on teenage pregnancy and how divorce affects children. The paper was part of a journalism class. The students claimed their freedom of speech had been violated.

In court, a federal trial judge ruled against the students, who subsequently appealed. The Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the decision. The school system then appealed to the Supreme Court, which agreed to hear the case.

In the past, public school student newspapers have operated under what has come to be called the "public forum" theory. Simply stated, "public forum" referred to the idea that because schools set up student newspapers as a forum for the exchange of student news and opinion, educators could not attempt to control the content of the paper simply because they disliked or disagreed with its content. In short, the state (the school) could not control or shut down such a public forum once that forum had been established. However, this never left the school at the mercy of its students' newspaper. Teachers and administrators could *always* censor students' writing if they believed the newspaper's content threatened a disruption of the school, invaded others' privacy, or suggested libel or obscenity---much like the limitations of the federal government concerning the free press in this country.

Until now. School officials in Hazelwood had the right, according to the court, "to regulate the contents of *Spectrum* (the student press) in any reasonable manner," and now every educator in the country may do the same. The majority opinion also stated that "Educators do not offend the First Amendment by exercising control over the style and content of student speech in school sponsored activities so long as their actions are reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns."

And what does that mean? Well, I'm sure some educators will be able to make it mean almost anything they want it to mean. That's what's so scary about it.

Some will use it to limit students' freedom of speech as they see fit. *Anything* they find offensive will become a "legitimate pedagogical concern" and disappear from students' newspapers. Others will use it to shut down student papers completely or slowly strangle them until they contain nothing of any interest so that students quit and go away. (This was common before the ruling; now it'll probably be worse.)

And others will continue to do what they've always done, least until someone with more authority stops them: to provide students with a realistic and valuable learning experience, and teach them writing, editing, judgment skills,

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business skills, civics, ethics, and responsibility in one of the most meaningful situations the public schools ever had the guts to offer.

However, providing that meaningful experience just got a hundred times harder and, in some schools, impossible. The Supreme Court lesson for today is that real education is dangerous-- too dangerous for students to fool with. Today's lesson teaches that students need not think for themselves because educators will do it for them. This lesson teaches that students are no longer the editors and decision-makers of their ideas and opinions--educators are. Student journalists no longer need worry about telling the truth even making sense. Educators will do it for them. It's less messy and a lot safer that way.

We've all heard the complaints about schools. We all know they're not as good as they should be--what is? But this does help: it hurts. If anything, students need *more* challenges a responsibility, not less. Courses need to be *more* meaningful, not less meaningful.

The Supreme Court decision in Hazelwood is a mandate for mediocre education. Students, not to mention the rest of us, suffer because of it.

(Part of this article first appeared as a letter to the editor of *The Grand Rapids Press.*)

Censorship
(Vol. 16, # 1, June 1991, pages 1-3)

At its September 1990 meeting, the NCTE Executive Committee authorized SLATE, as part of its political action function, to serve as NCTE's intellectual freedom network, and authonzed NCTE's Executive Director to provide whatever support seems reasonable in censorship cases. Editor's note: The following articles are related to the challenge to having Kin Platt's *The Doomsday Gang* removed from a junior high school library in South Carolina.

The Diary of One Censorship Case

In the spring of 1990, a book was banned from a junior high school library in South Carolina. This is an event that takes place with some regularity in the United States. To some, removing the book constituted an act of censorship. Others saw it as the community acting to protect its young people.

What follows recounts the story of the removal of Kin Platt's *The Doomsday Gang* from the York Junior High School library. (The stories are copyright by *The Herald,* a Rock Hill, South Carolina, daily newspaper, and are used with permission.)

BOOK BANNED FROM YORK SCHOOL

Judy H. Longshaw, staff writer, April 18, 1990

York school officials have banned the book, *The Doomsday Gang,* from the York Junior High School Library, administrators told the school board Tuesday.

Assistant Superintendent Tom Faulkenberry told the board at a meeting Tuesday that the book's language was inappropnate for junior high school students.

The book, written by Kin Platt, was challenged last month by a parent whose seventh-grader had checked the book out of the library. The novel deals with the formation of an urban street gang, their exploits in fighting and killing and their lifestyle.

"It was a hard call-a tough decision," Faulkenberry said, admitting that many students will now probably be encouraged to read the book simply because it is banned.

"They'll look for it and find it now," he said.

Faulkenberry said it is unusual for someone to challenge a library book, but even more unusual for the book to fail a committee decision at both the school and district level.

He said the decision was not unanimous at either level, but a majority did decide that "the prevailing use of slang" was not germane to the theme of the book.

School officials heard the information and took no action. No board members commented on the ban and no parents attended to comment.

BOOK MORE POPULAR AFTER SCHOOL BAN

Judy H. Longshaw, staff writer, April 19, 1990

A book recently banned from the York Junior High School library has gained more popularity by its dismissal than it experienced during its years on the school's shelves.

Media specialist Carol Podmore reported the book, *The Doomsday Gang,* written by well-known young adult writer Kin Platt, had been checked out less than 10 times in the past few years. The junior high is only 3 years old but the book was in the library at the middle school before then.

Neither the York County Library, Chester County Library, nor The Bookworm book store in Rock Hill carry the book, but all three carry other Platt titles. Both libraries reported requests for the book on Wednesday.

A check at The Bookworm revealed *The Doomsday Gang-* copyrighted in 1978--may not even be in print any longer.

York school board members heard Tuesday that the book's language-which includes profanity--was inappropnate for junior high school students and voted to have it taken off the shelves.

The book was subsequently taken off the shelves a few weeks ago and will probably end up in the paper shredder, said Principal Wilbert Holmes.

The book was challenged in March by a parent whose seventh-grader had checked it out of the library. The girl was described as a voracious reader.

Holmes said the parent who complained--he said he did not remember her name--was very rational and cooperative in her protest.

He continued that the book's language was no different than what you would hear on television.

"We do not want to advocate that this type of language is acceptable," he said, adding that this is the first book banned during his many years as principal.

One teacher in the school district, who asked not to be named, said she worried about the dangerous precedent of banning books. She said she did feel better that the book was just banned at the junior high but could be available at the high school level.

"You have to be very careful about banning books," she said. "You shouldn't just let one person decide a book is inappropriate."

YORK'S BOOK BANNING

Editorial, April 20, 1990

The problem isn't that kids are reading the wrong books. The problem is that kids aren't reading any books at all.

In a roundabout way, York school officials did their part this week to remedy that situation. By banning *The Doomsday Gang* from the York Junior High School library, officials almost ensured that this book, at least, will be well read by students.

The book was lifted from the library shelves for the usual reasons. A parent complained. The book's subject matter (street gangs) is disturbing. The language is a little rough for adolescents.

But if those were the only criteria needed to justify banning books, the shelves would be pretty bare. In fact, if book banners had their way, kids wouldn't have access to such classics as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, All Quiet on the Western Front, Brave New World, The Catcher in the Rye, Of Mice and Men, To Kill a Mockingbird,* and dozens of other books that deal meaningfully with that often troubling topic: life.

Let's not pretend that adolescents aren't exposed to the darker side of life. They see it in abundance on TV. They experience it in their own neighborhoods and family circles. They read about it in this newspaper.

Denying them access to one book--which may contain a sane and reasoned approach to dealing with the problems of growing up--is not only futile, it's also unfair. Young people need to be taught to think critically, to understand and respect views that may differ from theirs and to challenge comfortable assumptions.

Despite changing technology, the collected wisdom of the eons resides in the printed word, in books. Parents, teachers and other mentors can help guide children to the books that will help them grow and learn to become critical thinkers.

Taking books away from them will merely stifle that growth.

As York officials concede, however, banning *The Doomsday Gang* probably will just encourage students to read it.

Suggestion: Why not ban *The Scarlet Letter?* Maybe kids would actually read it for a change.

PLUMB LINE: BANNING BOOK SIMPLE SOLUTION

Terry Plumb, April 22, 1990

After recounting the events concerning the removal of Kin Platt's *The Doomsday Gang* from the York Junior High School library, Terry Plumb concluded his article with the following.

I would like for anyone from the school district office to explain how an author can write realistically about teen-age gangs and have his characters speak like church deacons. Racial epithets and four-letter words for bodily functions evidently were too much for school officials to stomach, however.

The story comes at a time when censorship, pornography and freedom of expression are much in the news. Consider:

> Museum officials in Cincinnati are busted for displaying sexually explicit photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe.
>
> The U.S. Supreme Court last week decided that citizens may be prosecuted for possessing child pornography.
>
> A bill has been introduced into the state House of Representatives that would make it a crime to display a bumper sticker containing offensive language.

The issues at stake in these various stories differ. Unfortunately, when lumped together in the public consciousness, they give rise to the impression that there is just too much filth out there.

The courts have come up with a serviceable definition of obscenity, one based on "community standards." Anyone who takes the trouble to compare what's available in video stores in Rock Hill with the inventory of similar stores in, say, New York has to admit the guidelines work--for the most part.

Why then shouldn't the good people of York, S.C., have the right to insist that the books in their children's school libraries be free of gutter talk? Why should taxpayers subsidize authors who write of life's seamier side?

Flip answers about the First Amendment and the need to expose citizens to a wide array of opinions mean little to parents who want their children to be uplifted, not tutored in the ways of street gangs.

Still, I cannot but think an injustice has been done in York.

I'll never forget an incident that occurred during my junior year at Jesuit High School in Tampa, Fla., nearly thirty years ago. Our English teacher, a brilliant man, bemoaned that he didn't dare assign the class to read a novel by an author I had never heard of--J. D. Salinger. I don't know what the rest of the class did, but at the first opportunity I bought a copy of *Catcher in the Rye.*

It blew my mind that someone could create a character like Holden Caulfield who was funny and self-destructive at the same time. He embodied every adolescent's worst fears. Yet, even while losing touch with reality, he maintained his integrity.

It never dawned on me to share *Catcher in the Rye* with my parents. No adolescent, uncomfortable with his own sexuality, wants to discuss with his mother and father a fictional teen-ager's pathetic grasp at adulthood.

Now, as a middle-aged parent myself, I know they would have understood both my embarrassment and the exhilaration that came from reading a great book. What makes *Catcher in the Rye* great is that its wisdom is universal, that it can be shared and appreciated by more than one generation.

Whether *The Doomsday Gang* contains a glimmer of such wisdom I cannot say.

Neither can the students or parents at York Junior High School.

That's a pity.

PROFANE OR PROFOUND?

Judy H. Longshaw, staff writer, April 24, 1990

A Winthrop College professor said the profanity in a book recently removed from York Junior High School for its offensive language was not gratuitous and served the author's point.

Terry Norton, an expert in adolescent literature, read *The Doomsday Gang* over the weekend and agreed to comment Monday on its suitability for junior high students.

"The language is no worse than what I've heard in junior high halls," said Norton, a member of the faculty in the School of Education. "Those students certainly don't belong to gangs."

He said well-known young adult writer Kin Platt demonstrated how most of the members of the gangs were from broken homes and grew up in the streets of Los Angeles.

"You wouldn't expect their language to be from a Sunday School class," said Norton, who has taught adolescent literature classes at the Rock Hill college for the past three years. "The language adds to the book's realism. Platt was trying to show the emptiness of their lives."

Yet, the mother of the seventh-grade girl who challenged the book strongly objected to the profanity.

"If the students used this language at school, they would be suspended," said the woman, who asked not to be identified. She complained about the mixed signals school officials were sending students. If you provide the book, you must approve of the language."

She said she read the book and conferred with other parents before challenging the book in March.

"You couldn't flip a page without seeing these words," she said. "There's no way to convey in the newspaper what these words were. I think the author carried it to the extreme and tried to be too realistic."

Assistant Superintendent Tom Faulkenberry said it is unusual for someone to challenge a library book, but even more unusual for the book to fail a committee decision at both the school and district level.

Norton commended the York school district for the committee method in which the book was removed. The book was read by a three-member school committee and then a district committee, which included parents, before it was decided to ban it from the junior high library earlier this month.

"If I had been on that committee, I would not have voted to remove it," Norton said. "It was available on the shelf and no one was forced to read it. But if they followed the committee procedure, then they were well within their rights."

Norton said book bannings tend to be self-defeating. "If you object to the language, then do you object to different scenes?" the Winthrop professor said. "Where do you draw the line?"

YORK TEACHERS CONCERNED ABOUT BANNING OF BOOK

Following are excerpts from a letter signed by 33 faculty members of York Comprehensive High School, May 3, 1990.

We are particularly distressed that censoring books is a violation of the traditional value of freedom upon which our country was founded and which has held numerous diverse immigrant groups together. As teachers and parents ourselves, we are aware of the genuine fear which motivates the censoring of books: a fear of community disapproval, a fear that students may erroneously believe we condone every idea in every book in our libraries, or perhaps even a fear of democracy itself.

... If we agree that freedom of education is a cornerstone of American society, then we must also agree that freedom in education is just as important. What a crime it would be if in seeking to protect our students from certain books by banning them we should instead teach them our own misgivings about their ability to think critically and our lack of faith in democracy.

DON'T TOLERATE FILTH IN OUR SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Following are excerpts from a letter to the editor written in response to the letter from teachers, May 11, 1990.

Concerning the three points made in the editorial and the faculty's agreement, I would like to respond to each one individually.

1. That adolescents are already exposed to the "darker side of life." That was agreed to so flippantly and arrogantly, as only state-paid educators could. Are we being told that street people and their vulgar life are setting the standard for the educational system? Shouldn't the state educational system direct the student to a more proper and acceptable way of speech?

2. That denying students access to books limits their ability to learn and think critically. Yes, the denying of all books would do that--but not the denial of a few poorly written books with vulgar street language.

3. That parents have a primary goal in guiding their children's choices of books. But as long as a few liberals rule the system and propagate their own particular brand of "freedom," and in overwhelming arrogance try to intimidate the parents--the parents (taxpayers) have few choices. If this issue was brought to vote by the parents, I expect we would see what the parents' primary goal would be.

... The illustrious 33 further said that they were aware of our "genuine fear which motivates the censoring of books." In arrogance, typical of state educators, they have the nerve to say that those who wanted the book removed were doing so out of fear. (Feigning graciousness, they say it is "genuine.") But on the other hand, what else could they say? This is an institution that refuses to acknowledge or teach morals. Talk about censoring that violates the freedom and liberties of a people! No, dear faculty, it was not out of fear, it was out of knowing Godliness and righteousness!

... I cannot believe the audacity of these 33 in saying that "our very nature as a public institution [has] a policy of all-inclusiveness." Then why is it that the Bible, Jesus Christ, Christianity and traditional morals are so fastidiously excluded? Why is it that the state, in league with the federal government, has legally outlawed the wisdom of Christ from the public school system?

I would like to thank each one who had a part in clearing this one book from the shelves of our public school. For having the fortitude to change status quo. I pray that as the mood of our nation returns to its traditional, Christian moorings they will screw up their courage to stand against liberals and continue to scrutinize not only the library shelves but those who are in charge of our children as well.

OFFENDED AT DECISION TO BAN LIBRARY BOOK

Following are three paragraphs excerpted from a letter to the editor, May 11, 1990.

What a sad state of affairs it is that in 1990 a piece of literature can be banned into oblivion. (Where are banned books stored? Are they destroyed forever?) As obscure as it already is, the book is gone forever from the library shelves.

The young people of York Junior High must leave the perimeters of their educational institution in order to gain access to a book they have every right to read. I don't know whether it's the Southern mentality of the school officials or the white-washing of inner-city life that needs to be addressed. Many young Southern students have no idea what an "inner-city" is, let alone what inner-city youth are like.

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I am appalled at the sheer inactivity of the parents to protest the decision. To the citizens of the country, the state and the county, you and your children have the sole right to decide what literature should enter your home. At this moment, *The Doomsday Gang* is but a small part of the big picture of life. Tomorrow, who knows?

THE DOOMSDAY GANG DESERVED TO BE BURNED

Excerpts from a letter to the editor, May 13, 1990

For starters, I'd like to say thank God it is gone from the shelves and I'm proud to say that the mom who got the book off the shelves is a good friend of mine and I'm tired of all the bad publicity she is getting. I was the one who encouraged her to push the school board to have it removed. But with all the negative things being written about it, we should have done what we started to, and that was to burn it and then pay for it. That way it would be gone and the whole hassle from it never would have happened.

And to the professor or whatever he is from Winthrop who said the language in it is language the junior high kids speak anyway, well, I think you're full of bologna. It's a minority of kids who use the type of language that was in the book--at least in York.

If books with such profanity in them (and it was on every page except the first 2 or 3) what will be next? *Hustler* or *Playboy?* Why not put books in the libraries that have meanings? Like the Bible. I wonder if the libraries have a Bible in them. So many kids don't have one in their homes and I can't think of a better book to read.

If a kid wants to read poetry, love stories, adventures, proverbs and parables, and even violence, it's all there but they'll get all truth, not just a bunch of profane words. And, for the record, *The Doomsday Gang* tells how to steal a car and blow [sic] up a school!

I would like to personally thank the members of the various boards who voted to ban it. I believe you will be rewarded for it, and the ones who voted against it, well, you must not have children. If you do, why don't you run out and buy a copy of it and lay it on your table for them to read whenever they want to?

And for you, my friend, who had courage to take a stand, way to go!

Three Censorship Vignettes
(Vol. 17, # 2, 1992, page 2)

Literate Parents Carry the Day

A teacher was challenged in Copenhagen, New York for using John Gardner's *Grendel* to help teach critical thinking. One family felt the language and violence in the book was unacceptable for 12th-grade students. When the issue was discussed at a Board of Education meeting, nearly 50 parents and other interested citizens from the town of less than 1,000 people attended in favor of the teacher and the book. According to the teacher, the supporting parents had all read the book, while none of the opposition had done so. She identified some reasons for the large turnout: the parents believed that censorship is wrong, that *Grendel* is a valuable book, and that teachers are professionals who are paid for making these kinds of decisions. The Board of Education removed all restrictions in a 4-3 vote.

Students' Voices Heard in Protest

In Des Moines, Iowa, parents wrote to complain about a teacher showing the movie version of S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* as a part of a seventh grade class study of the book. They objected to profanity and violence in both the film and the book. A Review Committee considered the complaint. According to one of the committee members, half of the seventh grade class attended the meeting to say, "Leave our books alone." The committee recommended that both the book and film remain part of the core curriculum. The School Board is expected to accept the recommendation.

Censor/Jock Loses in South Carolina Legislature

A bill introduced into the South Carolina Legislature last April called for a ban on teaching methods branded as "religious 'New Age' practices" which would "influence subconscious minds of students." The author of the bill, Rep. Mike Fair, sought to make illegal the use of guided imagery, visualization, meditation, and relaxation techniques in public schools. According to the Columbia, South Carolina State, Fair linked humanistic psychology with violence in the schools and an increase in neglect of skills instruction. Rep. Tim Wilkes challenged Fair, noting that if the bill were passed teachers would be unable to include authors like Emerson and Thoreau, whose ideas can be described as "the kind of thinking that transcends the normal." Fair replied that when he was in school, he resented that he was required to read Emerson and Thoreau. Wilkes responded, "But you were a jock, and I was an English major." The bill was defeated by a vote of 69-32.

The Fight Against Censorship
(Vol. 15, #1, April 1990, page 2)

The American Civil Liberties Union is probably the best recognized opponent to restrictions of those freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. Following is a list of other organizations al so interested in the fight against censorship.

American Civil Liberties Union
22 East 40th Street
New York, NY 10016
(212) 925-1222

American Library Association
Freedom to Read Foundation
50 East Huron Street Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 280-4224
(800) 545-2433, ext. 4224

International Reading Association
800 Barksdale Road
Box 8139
Newark, DE 19711

(302) 731-1600

Modern Language Association
10 Astor Place
New York, NY 10003
(212) 475-9500

National Coalition Against Censorship
2 West 64th Street
New York, NY 10023 (212) 724-1500

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road Urbana, IL 61801
(217) 328-3870

People for the American Way
2000 M Street, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 467-2382

Most Frequently Challenged Books
(Vol. 15, #1, April 1990, page 2)

According to the People for the American Way, the following are the most frequently challenged books from 1982-1990:
Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck
The Catcher in the Rye, J.D. Salinger
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain
The Chocolate War, Robert Cormier
Go Ask Alice, Anonymous
A Light in the Attic, Shel Silverstein
Deenie, Judy Blume
Then Again, Maybe I Won't, Judy Blume
Forever, Judy Blume
To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

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Part 3
Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Textbooks

SLATE Starter Sheet:
Censorship of Instructional Materials
by
Jesse Perry
(For the SLATE Steering Committee)
(Vol. 1, 15, September, 1976, p. 1)

The Issues

The American public schools, for many years, have been faced with the problem of censorship. Many such problems have been fostered by groups who question the use of instructional materials that do not meet their moral, religious, political, cultural, or ethnic values. Many view the reading of a diversity of instructional materials as a method to indoctrinate students with ideas and values that will turn them against their parents and established institutions or, at best, prompt them to imitate the characters they come across in books and other materials. Demands by various pressure groups to ban or limit the use of language arts instructional materials have often led to violence. These groups constantly remind the profession that they are the persons who "pay the bill" for the operation of schools; therefore, they have the right to make final decisions as to what curricular materials should be selected and used in *their* schools.

Professional Viewpoints: NCTE/Research

The National Council of Teachers of English has long supported the students' right to read. This organization believes two statements can safely be made about censorship: (1) any work is potentially open to attack by someone, somewhere, sometime., for some reason; and (2) censorship is often arbitrary and irrational.

NCTE at its 1967 and 1974 annual meetings issued resolutions condemning censorship of instructional materials, including textbooks. The NCTE Executive Committee endorsed a recent Statement of Concern as issued by the National Ad Hoc Committee Against Censorship.

Statement of Concern

> The steady erosion of First Amendment rights, stemming from the Supreme Court's 1973-74 obscenity holdings, menaces ever more critically the freedom of communication that is the indispensable condition of a healthy democracy. In a pluralistic society, it would be impossible for all people at all times to agree on the value of all ideas; and fatal to moral, artistic, and intellectual growth if they did.
>
> Some of the undersigned organizations reject all barriers abridging access to any material, however controversial or even abhorrent to some. Others reject barriers for adults, so long as their individual right of choice is not infringed. All of us are united in the conviction that censorship of what we see and hear and read constitutes an unacceptable dictatorship over our minds and a dangerous opening to religious, political, artistic, and intellectual repression.

Author Jerzy Kosinski sees censorship of acknowledged literary works as "a form of psychological malnutrition. Allowed to flourish, it stunts the emotional and intellectual growth of the very students it claims to protect."

In *The Students' Right to Read*, NCTE clarifies the relationship between censorship and the English teacher:

> The right of any individual not just to read but to read whatever one wants to read is basic to a democratic society. This right is based on an assumption that educated and reading persons possess judgment and understanding and can be trusted with the determination of their actions .... In selecting books for reading by young people, English teachers consider the contribution which each work may make to the education of the reader, its aesthetic value, its honesty, it readability for a particular group of students, and its appeal to adolescents.

Strategies for Action

You may wish to distribute this sheet along with the NCTE booklet, The *Students Right to Read*, to all teachers on your staff, to community and parent groups, to school board members, administrator groups, and to textbook and curriculum planning committees. In addition, you may want to:

> Contact your local NCTE affiliate for suggested names of local as well as national English language arts leaders who might be able to offer testimony and/or advice in censorship cases.
>
> Notify the author of the literary work in question. The author, as well as the publisher, might supply reviews by well-known critics and others that can assist you in making an effective stand.
>
> Write letters to the editors of newspapers when problems of censorship emerge.
>
> Organize anti-censorship groups in your communities or at local school sites. Work closely with your local NCTE affiliate who might issue position statements on censorship.
>
> • Consult *The Students' Right to Read* for a wealth of information and suggested strategies to assist you with censorship problems.

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Resources

American Civil Liberties Union, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010.
American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.
Kosinski, Jerzy, "Against Book Censorship." *Media and Methods*, January, 1976.
Donelson, Kenneth, ed. *The Students' Right to Read.* Urbana, Ill: NCTE, 1972.
"Selection of Instructional Materials: A Model Policy and Rules." Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

SLATE Starter Sheet
Textbook Selection
(Vol. 5, #1, December 1979, pages 1-2)
by
Thomas L Barton
(For the NCTE/SLATE Steering Committee)

The Issues

The issues surrounding textbooks in the schools are many and varied, including their high cost in a time of reduced budgets, controversial opinions about content in required texts, and selection and adoption procedures.

The purpose of this issue of SLATE is to bring into focus some of these issues so that informed decisions can be made regarding textbook selection and use.

Professional Opinions

The high cost of textbooks is a genuine problem to those responsible for budget-making and budget-keeping, but the tempting solution- "Let's just keep using the textbooks we already have" -is not necessarily an educationally sound one. On the other hand, purchasing a full set of new textbooks because the calendar suggests it is time is not a justifiable solution either. Criteria for textbook purchases should be closely dependent on selection and adoption procedures as well as on the place of textbooks in the instructional program as a whole.

The number of states mandating a single "approved" text is dwindling. Recognition of the need for local professional decision has grown so that even the states publishing an "approved text list" have broadened the numbers and kinds of people involved in constructing the list and typically include several titles from which schools may select the required text. Although such freedom is a welcome breath of fresh air, it places increased responsibility on local professionals and assumes careful, studied procedures for text selection.

National, regional, state, and local professional organizations regularly offer sources of help to local governing boards, administrators, and teachers. Most of this help is in the form of appropriate checklists, annotated bibliographies of available texts, consultants to assist selection procedures, and the like (see *Resources* below). None of this help should be viewed as a substitute for local district and school building personnel actually examining the texts potentially available to them in light of their identified and agreed upon aims, goals, and student needs.

The need for careful selection procedures is emphasized by the controversies that can develop around textbook content. Between 1966 and 1975, for example, the Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association reported over 910 censorship cases that had occurred in U.S. educational institutions. Of this number more than 62 percent were directed toward the public schools: 40 were on the elementary level, 77 on the junior high level, and 386 on the high school level. Sixty-four affected all levels, K-12 What is more alarming than the increase in numbers is that approximately two-thirds of all attempts were successful, resulting in the banning of materials from schools (L. B. Woods. "Is Academic Freedom Dead in the Schools?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, October 1979). These continued attempts by individuals and groups to control what students are allowed to learn (or even read) show little sign of lessening.

A judicial decision which favored a school librarian who contested a school board action to remove a poem from the library in Chelsea (Massachusetts) succinctly states the underlying issue:

> The board acted on the assumption that language offensive to it and some parents had no place in the educational system. With the greatest respect to them, their sensibilities are not the full measure of what is proper education.
>
> The board claims an absolute right to remove this poem from the shelves of the library. It has no such right. And compelling policy considerations argue against any public authority having such an unreviewable power of censorship. If this work may be removed by a committee hostile to its language and theme, then the precedent is set for the removal of any other work. The prospect of successive school boards "sanitizing" the school library of views divergent from their own is alarming. What is at stake here is the right to read and be exposed to controversial thoughts, a valuable right subject to First Amendment protection. The most effective antidote to the poison of mindless orthodoxy is ready access to a broad sweep of ideas. There is no danger in such exposure: the danger is mind control. ("New Court Decisions," *United States Law Week*. 1, August 1978).

Formally adopting and following a set of guidelines similar to that below can prove genuinely helpful when questions about texts occur.

Guidelines for Selection and Adoption of Textbooks

Effective procedures and objective standards for the selection of instructional materials can be established only after careful programs of comprehensive textbook assessment are planned and implemented. Concerned parents and teachers can ask that their schools take such steps as the following:

1. Establish a formal textbook evaluation committee with teacher and administrator representatives from each grade level. Include parent and community representatives as members of the committee.
2. Provide adequate released time for teacher committee members so as to avoid cursory attention to important issues when meetings are squeezed between scheduled classes and added to after-school demands.
3. Develop a "philosophy of textbook use." If, for example, one of the tenets of this philosophy were that textbooks should engage students in the active use of language, then succeeding steps in the selection process would be more sharply focused.
4. Review the current textbook policies and procedures of the local school district as well as those of the county and state.
5. Examine student needs assessment data compiled by curriculum development committees and other sources. This review may reveal areas with special needs.
6. Develop a set of review and selection criteria based on the local school situation.

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7. Check the comprehensiveness of the list by comparing it to criteria developed by other educators. Such lists can easily be acquired from state departments of education, county and local school districts, and professional organizations.
8. Ask individuals not on the committee to review and revise the criteria. This participation will help develop understanding and 'ownership' of the textbook review and selection process.
9. Distinguish the kinds of instructional materials needed. Too often complete sets of expensive main textbooks are purchased when what is really needed is a set of relatively inexpensive supplementary materials.
10 Solicit and collect all available textbooks which appear to meet the criteria developed.
11. Provide teachers, administrators, and parents with a opportunity to examine and test the materials their students and children appear to need.

Resources

The following list of sources may prove helpful to those charged with the selection of instructional materials. Other possible sources include: inspecting materials on other school reviewing publishers' offerings at national, state and local professional conferences; reviewing recommended adoptions by state and local education agencies: attending workshops and presentations by publisher representatives; and scanning of catalogs of professional materials from the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Reading Association, and commercial publishers (both major and minor ones).

Auckerman, R.C. "Assessing the Readability of Textbooks," *Reading in the Secondary Classroom.* N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 197: pp. 19-45.
Bleil, Gordon. "Evaluating Educational Materials," *Journal of Learning Disabilities,* volume 8, number 1, (January 1975). p. 19-25.
Davis, James E, ed. *Dealing with Censorship,* NCTE, 1979.
Donelson, Kenneth, ed. *The Students' Right to Read,* NCTE 1972.
English Language Arts Curriculum Guides K- 12, NCTE, 1979.
Grommon, Alfred H., ed. *Reviews of Selected Published Tests in English,* NCTE, 1976. *Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE Publications,* NCTE, 1976.
Huus, Helen. *Evaluating Books for Children and Young People,* IRA, 1968.

History Text Including Blacks Ordered Adopted in Mississippi
(Vol. 5 # 8, September 1980, p.3)

A history text, *Mississippi: Conflict and Change,* which covers both black and white perspectives on the eras of slavery, Reconstruction, and the civil rights struggle, has been placed on that state's approved list, by order of a federal district court judge. The book, edited by college professors James W. Loewen and Charles Sallis, was rejected in 1974 by a white majority of the state's textbook rating committee, an action which barred its use in public schools. The two black committee members voted in favor of the book, which later won the Lillian Smith Award for nonfiction, given by the Southern Regional Council.

Editors Loewen and Sallis contended that their text reflects new scholarship and includes a fair and accurate picture of blacks' role in the history of Mississippi. In their suit to reverse the textbook raters' action, they were joined by the public school system of predominantly black Jefferson County and by the Catholic school system. Their complaint charged that the rating committee's rejection was racially motivated and violated constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech, equal treatment under the law, and due process. (State procedures provided no appeal of rating committee decisions.) The case is *Loewen v. Turnipseed.*Judge Orma Smith, a native Mississippian, ruled that the history text could not be rejected because some rating committee members considered it controversial. He cited one education journal's review, which called the Loewen-Sallis text "by any reasonable criteria... far superior in format and content to all history textbooks we have seen." Judge Smith said in his opinion, "The field of education is one which needs particular constitutional protection. This is so because educational issues such as academic freedom are fundamentally linked with First Amendment guarantees." He scored the rating committee for its intent "to eliminate allegedly controversial material from the schools' curriculum, and to insure that only the views of those in authority would be communicated to school children." (Washington Post. April 5; *Education Daily,* April 10, 1980)

Knowledge vs. Tradition: Issues in Textbook Wars
(Vol. 7, #6, November 1982, pages 3 and 4)

Increasingly, the eyes of the nation are on Texas, chief battleground in the controversy over the proper content for public school texts. At issue are such vexed questions as these, about state adoption of textbooks:

Where does selectivity in text purchases end and where does censorship begin?

How far are book publishers prepared to go in omitting current scientific knowledge and critically acclaimed literature to win lucrative state adoptions for their books?

In deciding what millions of public school students will read in texts, how far should a state education agency bend to accommodate the views of organized special-interest groups?

Adoption Hearings in Texas

Each year, the Texas Board of Education notifies publishers of the school subjects for which it will adopt texts. (Adoption means that for six to eight years, local districts can select only from the texts on the short state-approved list. Twenty-two states have state adoption policies.)

Until this year, public comment about texts under consideration in Texas was confined to objections. This was the procedure under which Norma and Mel Gabler gained national media attention by reviewing texts, quoting passages they identified as eroding traditional values, and filing voluminous objections with the State Textbook Committee. Their objections comprised six of the state's 10 published volumes covering the 1982 hearings. "The Gablers' research is used by the Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, and other conservative organizations," Dan Balz noted in a *Washington Post* article on the Texas adoption hearings August 16.

This year, People for the American Way, a group organized by TV producer Norman Lear to counter conservative pressures, asked and got permission from the Texas State Textbook Committee to respond in writing to the Gablers' charges about texts. In its comments, PAW focused on conservative protests which it said:

"Seek to restrict discussion and the free exchange of ideas in the classroom;
"Impose a narrow religious and political orthodoxy on public school students;
"Are factually inaccurate or incorrectly interpret the governing law."

PAW then rebutted a series of Gabler charges against passages in a number of texts.

One example, citing a Follett text, *World Geography:*

From the text: "Nothing about the earth's beginnings is known with any certainty.... "

"Objection: This is a matter of opinion. Such a statement presented as fact undermines the belief that some parents teach their children of creation."

People for the American Way Comment re: Objection: "This objection not only is against evolution, but all of science as well. If the creationist belief that the earth is only several thousand years old were accepted, there could be little astronomy, since stars are estimated to be more than 6,000 light years away; techniques of dating rocks which show that the earth is billions of years old would be dismissed, making much of physics and chemistry unacceptable. The creationist approach to science is to replace the scientific method of hypothesis and corroboration with religious faith and belief."

Just Two Little Texans?

The Gablers continue to characterize themselves to the media simply as citizens exercising their right of free speech. In response to Texas PAW director Michael Hudson's statement ("We're absolutely convinced that the Gablers are a significant part of the New Right's agenda for changing America."), Norma Gabler told the *Post:* "They're obsessed with us. For Norman Lear to march in here with his million-dollar organization to fight two little Texans is just hilarious."

Post writer Balz listed the Gablers' Educational Research Analysts as a $120,000-a-year operation employing eight people plus outside reviewers to scrutinize texts.

What the Publishers Say

When they asked publishers about the extent of text revisions to gain adoption, both Balz and Gene Maeroff of the *New York Times* got low-keyed, diplomatic responses.

"I'm glad to see there is an opportunity for people to voice their opinions," Prentice-Hall regional manager S.L. Fuller told Maeroff (August 15).

"In most cases," Allyn & Bacon president Richard S. Carroll told Maeroff," changes requested by the state are not a large scale and if they are made it is cause the publisher thinks it will be improvement .... There are times have refused to make changes. Some quests are radical and would change tone of the book."

"... publishers say they edit their textbooks with an eye to acceptance in many states as possible, not just to avoid attacks by the Gablers," Balz wrote.

But *IS* Selection Censorship?

"Selecting the five best books for students of the State of Texas is not censorship. Banning books is censorship," Texas State Deputy Superintendent Education Grace Grimes told the *Times.*

From Anthony Podesta, executive director of People for the American Way came this comment to the *Times:* "Texas has the buying power to influence development of teaching materials nation-wide, and a textbook edition chosen Texas often becomes the sole edit available. The kinds of censorship pressures that originate in Texas have become so intense that publishers have begun self-censor."

But Douglas Eklund of the Association: of American Publishers told the *Post* "There's a great deal of misinformation being put out by them [PAW] ."

The *Post* noted conflicting reports about the Gablers' success in getting texts rejected by Texas authorities. Critics, Balz noted, claimed the Gablers got Texas to turn down seven social studies texts last year. "In fact," he wrote, "of 13 texts offered, the Gablers objected to 11. Of the five selected, four had been criticized by the Gablers."

Balz quoted Judith Krug, director the American Library Association's office of Intellectual Freedom, as saying, "Texas has a very good process. There the opportunity to express one's opinion. The Gablers found the mechanism a long time ago and utilized it to the fullest. Other groups are now utilizing the same process."

Citizen participation in text select is growing, Maeroff observed. "So school districts in the Northeast are starting to include parents on book select committees, hoping to aid complaints about books before they are part of curriculum ."

Barbara Parker, director of PAW's National Schools and Libraries Project noted in a letter to the *Washington Post* August 28 that the prospect of adverse publicity for a text, through state adopton controversy, has already had a chilling effect on publishers.

"Until the Texas process and others across the country allow citizens to defend quality textbooks," she wrote "publishers will continue to produce-- and some textbook committees will continue to select-- textbooks that simply cater to those who make the most noise."

Textbook Proponents Win a Voice in Texas Adoption Hearings
(Vol. 8, #3, May, 1983, page 6)

The Texas state board of education has acted to assure not only opponents of textbooks proposed for state adoption but proponents as well to have a voice in text adoption hearings. The board's decision came after People for the American Way (a lobbying group combatting efforts to limit the content of texts) argued that the existing adoption process gives would-be censors the advantage. The Texas legislature is expected to implement the board's changes. (WP: 2/11/82)

Starter Sheet
Combatting Censorship Of Instructional Materials
by
Geneva T. Van Horne (For the SLATE Steering Committee)
(Feb. 1983)

The Issues

Censorship of instructional materials is pervasive nationally and increasing sharply. A recent study sponsored by the Association of American Publishers, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the American Library Association revealed that more than 20 percent of the nation's school districts and 30 percent of our school libraries have been involved in challenges of materials and that these challenges have influenced the selection of instructional materials. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, ten professional associations, including the National

Council of Teachers of English, have formed a coalition, the Academic Freedom Group, to develop "a detailed and specific action program."

All members of the coalition clearly recognize that censor ship challenges have not been isolated skirmishes. Evidence suggests that they are most often a significant part of the political and economic battle plan of well-organized, nationally powerful affiliations such as the conservative "New Right" activists and fundamentalist religious groups.

Issues are complex, but they include concerns such as:

- What role do students, parents, and educators play in the development of educational programs and in the selection and use of instructional materials?
- Do students have a right to learn about a subject, "a right to know"?
- What academic and professional rights do teachers have regarding materials selection and teaching techniques for classroom group use? For individual student use?
- Do parents have a right to forbid that their children be exposed to specific cultural, moral, religious, ethnic, scientific, or political views and materials?
- For what in education may public tax money be legitimately used?
- What rights are guaranteed by the First Amendment that impact upon learning and teaching in the public schools?

Professional Viewpoints: NCTE

The National Council of Teachers of English and its state affiliates have as one of their major concerns matters related to censorship and the teaching of the English language arts. The Council is, for example, a member of the National Coalition Against Censorship; it encourages efforts of its standing committee, the Committee Against Censorship; it publishes many useful works, such as those listed in the bibliography, that are designed to aid members to cope successfully with censorship problems; and it has passed resolutions opposing censorship at its 1967, 1974, and 1981 meetings. The 1981 resolution reads in part: "RESOLVED, that in the face of increasing censorship the members of the National Council of Teachers of English reaffirm the student's right of access to a wide range of books and other learning materials under the guidance of qualified teachers and librarians; and that all English teachers be urged to resist censorship by employing points of view and approaches recommended in The Students' Right to Read and other NCTE publications on censorship. "

Strategies for Action

1. Develop and promote, on a regular basis, good public relations and communication with community groups and parents about the school's philosophy and goals, the English-language arts educational objectives, the curricula and classroom and library-media programs.
2. Distribute this material and the NCTE booklet, *The Students' Right to Read*, to all faculty, school board members, administrators, community and parent groups.
3. Prepare, and have formally adopted by the school board, a written selection policy for all media, print and audio visual. Include a well-defined procedure for handling challenged materials. Coverage should include:
    a. Philosophy and goals of the school system
    b. Goals and objectives of the instructional program
    c. Responsibility for selection of instructional materials
    d. Criteria for selection of instructional materials
    e. Standard, professional and current selection tools to be consulted (e.g., *Elementary School Library Collection*, W.H. Wilson Company Catalog Series, *Book Finder*, and NCTE booklists)
    f. Procedures for reconsideration of instructional materials
        (1) Statement of policy
        (2) Guiding principles
        (3) Specific procedures
            (a) Informal resolution
            (b) Formal resolution
        (4) Forms would include:
            (a) Instructional objectives rationale form
            (b) Reconsideration of instructional materials form
            (c) Reconsideration of non-fiction instructional materials form
            (d) Reconsideration of fiction instructional materials form
        (5) Appendix would include documents such as:
            The Students' Right to Read. National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL, 1982.
            School Library Bill of Rights for School Library Media Programs. American Association of School Libraries of American Library Association, 1980.
            American Library Council. *Sexism, Racism, and Other Isms in Library Materials.* American Library Association, 1973.
            Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Executive Council. *Statement on Censorship.* ASCD, 1982.
            National Coalition Against Censorship. "Statement of Concern." NCAC, 1982.
4. Follow the procedure for handling challenged materials without deviation.
    a. Attempt to resolve the challenge informally, but if at the end of the meeting, the complainant still wishes to challenge the material, a form for reconsideration should be provided.
    b. Only when the written request for reconsideration has been filed should the formal review process commence as outlined in the selection policy
    c. Adhere to the policy established for reconsideration of instructional materials. There should be no restrictions or curtailment of use of the questioned material while it is being reconsidered.
    d. Follow the time line established in the policy. Complete the process with the written report.
    e. Consult your NCTE state president, local English supervisor, and English language arts state department consultant for further assistance and advice.
5. Acquaint the faculty, administrators, and parents with all aspects of the selection policy and the challenged materials procedure through in-service programs and workshops yearly so there is no question of what is involved or what is to be done.
6. Keep on file a written faculty rationale, an explanation of the controlling principle, for any materials students read or study in common or that are most-often censored.
7. Permit students to have an alternate assignment or allow students choices when developing course assignments and objectives.
8. Provide a variety of books and materials addressed to different levels of readability, maturation, and interest.
9. Honor a parent's right to exempt his or her child from content or assignments to which he or she objects.

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10. Use standard and current professional bibliographies when selecting materials to support the instructional program.
11. Include a clause in the bargaining contract protecting academic freedom. Work for Board adoption of grievance procedures to protect teachers' due process rights.
12. Consult current references on censorship available from NCTE, ALA, and other professional organizations such as those cited in the bibliography below.

Censorship in your school system may well be prevented if you follow the foregoing guidelines and those in the NCTE *Students' Right to Read.*

Resources

American Library Association. Office of Intellectual Freedom. 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.
National Coalition Against Censorship. 132 West 43rd Street, New York, New York 10036.
National Council of Teachers of English. 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

Publications

Association of American Publishers, American Library Association, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. *Limiting What Students Read: Books and Other Learning Materials in Our Public Schools: How They Are Selected and How They Are Removed.* New York, New York: AAP, 1981.

Burress, Lee, and Edward Jenkinson. *The Students' Right to Know.* Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1982.

Davis, James E., ed. *Dealing With Censorship.* Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1982.

Jenkinson, Edward B. *Censors in the Classroom. The Mind Benders.* Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979.

Minnesota Coalition Against Censorship. *Essential Elements of Instructional Resource Selection Policies and Reconsideration Procedures.* Minneapolis, Minnesota: MCAC, 1980.

National Council of Teachers of English. "Statement of Censorship and Professional Guidelines." Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1982.

National Education Association, Teacher Rights Division. *Helping Teachers Teach All the Children: Workshop Resource Book.* Washington, D C.: NEA, 1981.

O'Neil, Robert M. *Classrooms in the Crossfire: The Rights and Interests of Students, Parents, Teachers, Administrators, Libranans and the Community.* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1981.

The Students' Right to Read. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1982.

Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction. *Guidelines for the Development of Instructional Materials Selection Policies.* Olympia, Washington: Washington State
Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1981.

Entire issues devoted to the topic in selected journals: *Indiana English.* Fall, 1977; *Missouri English Bulletin* 38. May, 1980; *New Jersey Libraries.* Summer, 1982; *Ohio Media Spectrum.*Summer, 1982; *Social Education.* April, 1982; *Wisconsin English Journal.* April, 1980; *Wisconsin Library Bulletin.* Spring, 1981.

STARTER SHEET
Developing Rationales

by
Jean E. Brown
Saginaw Valley Sate University
and
Elaine C. Stephens
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(April, 1994)

The purpose of this Starter Sheet is to help teachers and English language arts departments to develop rationales for the literature they use in their classrooms and to provide a list of rationalesthat are currently available through SLATE. It is organized into four areas: What is a rationale? Why develop them? How do we develop rationales? and Where do we get more assistance?

What is a Rationale?

We frequently hear the term *rationale* defined as a justification for doing something. Certainly that perspective is a vital one as we explore the need for developing rationales for books or other material. Both Diane Shugert (1979) and Margaret Sacco (1993) advocate writing and keeping a file of rationales as a defense against potential censorship. We will frame the discussion in a broader context, describing the overriding role of rationales in classroom planning. Teachers must make decisions about what they will teach and how they will then teach it, decisions that will achieve their purposes and address their students' needs. The value of developing a rationale is that it provides a framework for this planning.

A rationale is the articulation of the reasons for using a particular literary work, film, or teaching method. Minimally, a rationale should include:

- a bibliographic citation and the intended audience
- a brief summary of the work and its educational significance
- the purpose of using ithe work and how it will be used
- potential problems with the work and how these can be handled
- alternative works an individual student might read or view.

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Shugert (1979) identifies criteria for assessing rationales. Among these guidelines are that they are well though out, avoid specialized technical jargon, are specific and thorough, and written so that they will be readily understood by the teachers who use the work. These and other components of rationales will be explored in the section on Guidelines for Developing Rationales.

Why Develop a Rationale?

Rationale development should be a part of thoughtful planning for classroom instruction. If we have not reflected on the whys of what we will teach, we will be unprepared to meet the needs and challenges of our students and to respond to potential complaints, either from parents or from other members of the community who seek to influence the curriculum.

While rationales are important in every aspect of teaching, we will focus here on the need for well-developed rationales for books used in the classroom--whether in whole-class instruction, small group work, or classroom libraries. Teachers who make curricular decisions based upon expediency leave themselves vulnerable. Problems can be averted by carefully analyzing the audience (the students), the school, and the community and taking into full account the account the most effective means for meeting students' interests and educational needs.

How Do We Develop Rationales?

Teachers are frequently advised to have a written rationale for every book that they use. Realistically, this issue might be better addressed in a less absolute way by exploring four levels of rationale development. In an ideal situation, teachers would automatically write a rationale for every book that they teach, assign, include on a reading list, or keep in their classroom libraries. But mandating teachers to take on such a task when they are already overburdened is unrealistic and unreasonable. If teachers were to write rationales for every book, many might simply stick to their literature anthologies and even avoid potentially controversial selections in those books. So while Shugert (1979, p.190-91) rightly cautions about using shortcuts to rationales, we do suggest options in the belief that the circumstances and conditions will determine what the teachers will do at any time.

1. A brief, written statement of purpose for using a particular book-- the *why* for using it and *where it will fit in the curriculum*. This is prepared by individual teachers based on the students, school, and communitynoted above and on curricular and instructions objectives and needs. At this level of rationale writing it is essential for teachers to have a *written* statement. Just thinking about the reason is not enough,to demonstrate thoughtful planning, if a protest should arise, nor does it provide teachers with opportunities to be reflective about their decisions.

2. The second level involves a more detailed accounting through the use of forms. Figures 1 and 2 show sample forms from the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English which are included in Shugert's discussion of rationale writing (1979, pages 192-93). These samples provide two approaches-- the first for an individual teacher to complete and the second for department members to fill out together. Of course, both forms can be modified to meet the needs of particular situations.

Completion Form

Teacher's Rationale

School: Teacher:

Title:

Grade or Course:

Approximate date(s) a book will be used:

This book will be (check one or more):

_____ Studied by the whole class.

_____ Studied by the whole class.

_____ Placed on a reading list.

_____ Placed in a classroom library

_____ Recommended to individual students.

_____ Part of a larger study of (explain):

_____ Other (explain):

Ways in which the book is especially appropriate for students in this class

Ways in which the book is especially pertinent to the objectives of this course or unit:

Special problems that might arise in relation to the book and some planned activities which handle this problem:

Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of this book:

Figure 1--Individual Teacher's form

Completion Form

English Department Rationale

School: Title:

Recommended grade(s) or course(s):

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Ways in which the book is appropriate for students in this school:

Ways in which the book is especially pertinent to the objectives of this curriculum:

Special problems that might arise in relation to the book:

Ways that a teacher might handle those problems:

Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of this book:

Figure 2--English Department Form

3. The third level provides for the development of fully constituted rationales by individual teachers, departmental or district-wide committees, or by the district English language arts coordinator or supervisor in cooperation with teachers. These rationales include many of the elements discussed above and will be explored even further in the next section.

4. The fourth level calls for the collection of existing rationales that have been developed by other teachers or by professional organizations. By their nature these rationales are often the most comprehensive because they are developed as a service for schools that have challenges.

Guidelines for Writing a Rationale

The guidelines below will promote consistency as well as provide direction and support for writing rationales individually, in small collegial groups, or in departments. Sacco, in a paper prepared for the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN) Intellectual Freedom Committee, and Shugert (1979) are among those who have presented systematic views of *how* to put together a rationale. Sacco uses a structured format in developing rationales with her undergraduate students; Shugert provides a more open-ended approach based on the following questions posed by Donelson (1979, p. 166):

1. For what classes is this book especially appropriate?
2. To what particular objectives, literary or psychological or pedagogical, does this book lend itself?
3. In what ways will the book be used to meet those objectives?
4. What problems of style, tone, or theme or possible grounds for censorship exist in the book?
5. How does the teacher plan to meet those problems?
6. Assuming that the objectives are met, how would students be different because of their reading of this book? (p. 166)

Fundamentally, Sacco, Shugert, and Donelson concur that the role of the rationale is to provide a written statement of teachers' best professional perspective on their curriculum. The following guidelines for preparing rationales draw upon and synthesize their ideas.

1. **The bibliographic citation.** A rationale should begin with a bibliographic citation including author's name, complete book title, publisher, publication date, and edition.
2. **The intended audience.** The rationale should articulate the type of class and range of grade levels at which the book will be used. The rationale should indicate whether the book is going to be used for individualized study, small group work, or whole-class study, along with an explanation why the book is being used.
3. **A brief summary of the work.** There are a number of valuable reasons for writing a book in the rationale. Writing a summary, requires an in-depth look at the book. The summary provides an overview of the book for anyone who chooses to read it, while that reminder requires those important and aspects that relate to its educational significance.
4. **The relationship of the book to the program.** Reading a book is not an isolated educational experience; as a part of the total program, the book should be consistent with the ongoing objectives of the class. Regardless of the quality of a book, if it does not make sense within the broad goals of program, it is an inappropriate choice in that particular classroom. Any discussion of objectives should also include an examination of *how* a book will be used, including the teaching methodology and methods of assessment.
5. **The impact of the book.** One of the significant arguments for any work is the ways in which it will open new perspectives to its readers. In determining the reasons for using a book, teachers should also consider the potential impact it will have on students' behavior or attitudes.
6. **Potential problems with the work.** Teachers and districts are often blindsided by complaints that they never anticipated. The reflective process of developing a rationale is an opportunity for anticipating uses of language, actions, and situations in a work that might be the source of challenges. Additionally, as teachers examine potential problems, they have the opportunity to make decisions about how to address the language in Walter Dean Myers' *Fallen Angels*. The issue can be framed within the book's quality and strengths. For example, a teacher might anticipate an objection to the language in *Fallen Angels*. The issue can be framed within the book's realistic portrayal of young men fighting in Vietnam; the language, while inappropriate in many settings, helps to build the portrait of the war's horrors. The language quite simply adds to the book's credibility.
7. **Collection of information about the book.** It is useful to collect reviews about the book, especially published book reviews. Professional journals and booklists from various associations (e.g., NCTE, the International Reading Association, American Library Association, journals like *ALAN Review*, *English Journal*, and *The New Advocate*, as well as non-school sources like the *New York Times Book Review* and *Time* magazine, are rich resources that can be searched via various databases for reviews of particular books. Reviews that address any controversial issues in a book are particularly helpful. These materials should be kept in a file with the rationale.
8. **Collection of supplementary information.** Teachers should collect additional materials, such as biographical information about the author especially if it includes any critical assessment of the author's work.
9. **Collection of books of rationales.** Book of rationales such as *Rationale for Commonly Taught Books* (Connecticut English Journal, Vol. 15, 1983), *Celebrating Censored Books!* (Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, Ed. Nicholas J. Karolides), and *Hit List* (Intellectual Freedom Committee, American Library Association, 1989) are valuable as part of the teacher's individual library or as part of the department's professional library.
10. **Alternative works an individual student might read.** For each book that they use, teacher should have a list of related titles that might serve either as an alternative or as a supplement to the book. The list of alternatives is useful when parents exercise their rights to choose what their child will read. Additionally, the list may be used when students are choosing books from several options or when they want to read related works. In other words, the listing can be useful in a number of ways, not simply when there is a challenge.

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What to Do Once There is a Challenge

The widely used NCTE booklet entitled "The Students' Right to Read" (1977) provides a model for establishing an orderly process of review when books or other instructional materials are challenged. Rationales are dynamic documents that can play an important part in the process because they provide a perspective about the quality and value of a work.

When there is a challenge, the arena for the discussion becomes public with many people involved. Too often administrators are asked to respond to parental or public complaints about a work that they may never have read. School board members often are also involved. A rationale provides a summary, objectives for using the book, and potential problems in using it, as well as the background materials, and opinions of the critics, all compiled in a folder for easy examination for everyone who will be involved in discussion of the challenge. Rationales are often used to refute the individual or collective charges that are made against a work. Additionally, the reviews and supplementary material provide a framework of support from educators and critics.

Having a rationale can be equated to being prepared. Many groups that are organized to attempt to control the curriculum depend upon the schools to be unprepared when they mount a challenge. Being prepared can help schools to short-circuit highly organized challenges in some cases. Also, rationales can provide the information that parents are seeking when they raise questions about curriculum materials.

Where to Get More Assistance

Rationales for works taught in English and language arts, K-12 are available through SLATE when particular book protest arise. The NCTE/SLATE program for responding to challenges to instructional materials is coordinated through the office of the Deputy Executive Director. SLATE has become an informal clearinghouse for rationales for works that are often taught (or included on booklists) in English and language arts, K-12 classroom. Listed at the end of this Starter Sheet are the works for which rationales have been prepared.

NCTE frequently receives calls for assistance from teachers in the field who are involved in book challenges. If the subject of protest is one of the books listed below, SLATE sends to the teacher at no cost . In response to to the teacher's call, SLATE also sends, at no cost, a Censorship Packet that includes "The Students' Right to Read," "Guidelines for Dealing with Censorship of Nonprint Materials," and other useful documents. Frequently, representatives of SLATE also writes letters in defense of challenged books to appropriate administrators or school board members. This is done in cooperation with local and regional SLATE Representatives and sometimes with additional support from organizations such as the American Library Association, National Education Association or American Federation of Teachers, International Reading Association, or the National Coalition Against Censorship. The Council sometimes signs on to *amicus* briefs when censorship cases go to court.

You are urged to save the list at the end of this Starter Sheet and refer to it in the event of book challenges in your school, district, or state. The list, which presently contains rationales for over 200 titles, will continue to grow as SLATE learns about new book challenges. If you think that a particular work should be included and it is not on the list, please send the title and author to SLATE, c/o NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Better yet, you can volunteer to write a rationale for the book in accordance with the guidelines for rationales described here.

The rationales at NCTE are drawn from several sources, including the previously mentioned resources: *Rationales for Commonly Taught Books, Celebrating Censored Books!,* and *Hit List.* Some of the rationales were written by teachers, others by supervisors, and others by teacher educators. By far the most prolific contributor has been Margaret Sacco, who with the students in her adolescent literature and media course at Miami University, Ohio, has written dozens of rationales for young adult novels in cooperation with ALAN, Adolescent Literature Assembly, NCTE. SLATE is grateful for her continuing contributions and for the pioneering work done by the Connecticut and Wisconsin affiliates in the aforementioned publications.

SLATE emphasizes that the books listed below and the rationales for them in no way constitute an "approved" reading list. Selection of instructional materials and development of appropriate criteria for inclusion in K-12 programs should be geared towards local situations and should range more widely than any particular list might suggest. Similarly, the existence of a rationale for a particular book does not imply that the book is endorsed for teaching in any grade and under all conditions. For example teachers might judge some books to be more appropriate for inclusion on a optional reading list than for whole-class study. Other books might be seen as particularly appropriate for a particular grade level or student population. Again, such decisions are in the realm of the professional judgment of teachers in the field. The primary use of rationales is to provide additional support and documentation for the thoughtful educational choices that are made by teachers.

References

American Library Association. Young Adult Services Division's Intellectual Freedom Committee (1989) *Hit List: Frequently Challenged Young Adult Titles. References to Defend Them.* Chicago: ALA.

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Sacco, Marg T. "Writing Rationales for Using Young Adult Literature in the Classroom." Oxford, Ohio: Unpublished Manuscript.

Shurgert, Diane, editor (1983) *Rationales for Commonly Taught Books in Connecticut English Journal,* Vol. 15, 1983.

Shurgert, Diane. (1979) "How to Write a Rationalen Defense of a Book," in *Dealing with Censorship,* edited by James E. Davis. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Book Rationales

About David, Susan Beth Pfeffer

After the First Death, Robert Cormier

After the First Love, Isabelle Holland

All Together Now, SueEllen Bridgers

Animal Farm, George Orwell

Annie on My Mind, Nancy Garden

Are You in the House Alone? , Richard Peck

Anzona Kid , Ron Koertge

Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, Ernest Gaines

A Band of Angels, Julian Thompson

Being There, Jerzy Kosinski

Benjamin Franklin, Ingri & Edgar Parin d'Aulaire

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, Barbara Robinson

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Beyond the Chocolate War, Robert Cormier

Black Like Me, John Griffin

Bless the Beasts and Children, Glendon Swarthout

Blood Red Ochre, Kevin Major

Blubber, Judy Blume

Brave New World, Aldous Huxley

Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson

Building Blocks, Cynthia Voight

The Bumblebee Flies Anyway, Robert Cormier

The Cage, Ruth Minsky Spender

Call it Courage, Sperry Armstrong

The Cay, Theodore Taylor

Charlotte's Web, E.B. White

Catcher in the Rye, J.D. Salinger

The Chocolate War, Robert Cormier

The Color Purple, Alice Walker

Cold Sassy Tree, Olive Ann Burns

Commander Toad in Space, Jane Yolen

The Contender, Robert Lipsyte

Crow Boy, Taro Yashima

Cry, The Beloved Country, Alan Paton

Cujo, Stephen King

Daddy's Roommate, Michael Willhoite

A Day No Pigs Would Die, Robert Peck

The Day They Came to Arrest the Book, Nat Hentoff

Death Be Not Proud, John Gunther

Deenie, Judy Blume

Deliverance, James Dickey

Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank

Dicey's Song, Cynthia Voight

Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack, M.E. Kerr

The Divorce Express, Paula Danziger

Don't Look Behind You, Lois Duncan

The Duplicate, William Sleator

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, Tom Wolfe

Enoch, Robert Bloch

Ethan Frome, Edith Wharton

The Executioner, Jay Bennett

Fade, Robert Cormier

Fallen Angels, Walter Dean Myers

Famous All Over Town, Danny Santiago

Far From Shore, Kevin Major

A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway

Fell, M.E. Kerr

Flowers for Algernon, Daniel Keyes

From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, E.L. Konigsburg

Forever, Judy Blume

A Gathering of Old Men, Ernest J. Gaines

The Giver, Lynn Hall

Go Ask Alice, Anonymous

The Goats, Brock Cole

Going for the Big One, P.J. Petersen

The Good Earth, Pearl Buck

Good-bye Tomorrow, Gloria D. Miklowitz

The Grapes of Wrath, John Steinbeck

The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Great Gilly Hopkins, Katherine Paterson

Grendel, John Gardner

The Grounding of Group Six, Julian Thompson

Hamlet, William Shakespeare

Happy Endings Are All Alike, Sandra Scoppettone

Harriet The Spy, Louise Fitzhugh

Healer, Peter Dickinson

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter, Carson McCullers

A Hero Ain't Nothing But A Sandwich, Alice Childress

Hiroshima, John Hershey

The Hobbit, J.R.R. Tolkien

Home Before Dark, Sue Ellen Bridgers

House of Stairs, William Sleator

Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain

I Am the Cheese, Robert Cormier

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, Joanne Greenberg

If Beale Street Could Talk, James Baldwin

I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip, John Donovan

In Country, Bobbie Mason

Interstellar Pig, William Streator

It's OK If You Don't Love Me, Norma Klein

Izzy, Willy-Nilly, Cynthia Voight

Jacob Have I Loved, Katherine Paterson

James and the Great Peach, Roald Dahl

Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte

Johnny Got His Gun, Dalton Trumbo

Journey to Topaz, Yoshiko Uchida

Jubilee, Margaret Walker

Killing Mr. Griffin, Lois Duncan

The Last Mission, Harry Mazer

The Late Great Me, Sandra Scoppetone

Learning How to Fall, Norma Klein

The Learning Tree, Gordon Parks

The Little House on the Prairie, Laura Wilder

Little Women, Louisa Alcott

The Lords of Discipline, Pat Conroy

The Lord of the Flies, William Golding

"The Lottery," Shirley Jackson

Love is Not Enough, Marilyn Levy

Love Story, Eric Segal

The Man Without a Face, Isabelle Holland

Manchild in the Promised Land, Claude Brown

Maniac Magee, Jerry Spinelli

May I Cross Your Golden River, Paige Dixon

Memory, Margaret Mahy

Midnight Hour Encores, Bruce Brooks

Mr. & Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, Ann Head

Mr. Popper's Penguins, Richard Atwater

The Moffats, Eleanor Estes

Mom, the Wolfman and Me, Norma Klein

Moonlight Man, Paula Fox

Morris, the Moose, B. Wiseman

The Moves Make the Man, Bruce Brooks

My Brother Sam Is Dead, James Lincoln & Christopher Collier

My Darling, My Hamburger, Paul Zindel

Never Cry Wolf, Farley Mowat

Night Kites, M.E. Kerr

Nineteen Eighty-Four, George Orwell

No More Saturday Nights, Norma Klein

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck

Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway

On Fire, Ouida Sebestyne

On the Beach, Nevil Shute

One Fat Summer, Robert Lipsyte

One Fine Day, Nonny Hogrogian

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Ken Kesey

Ordinary People, Judith Guest

Other Bells for Us to Ring, Robert Cormier

The Other Way to Listen, Baylor & Parnell

Our Bodies, Ourselves, Boston Women's Health

The Outsiders, S.E. Hinton

The Pearl, John Steinbeck

Permanent Connections, Sue Ellen Bridgers

Pet Sematary, Stephen King

The Pigman, Paul Zindell

Prank, Kathryn Lasky

Princess Ashley, Richard Peck

Rage, Richard Bachman (a.k.a. Stephen King)

Ragtime, E.L. Doctorow

Remembering the Good Times, Richard Peck

Robodad, Carter Alden

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred Taylor

Romeo & Juliet, William Shakespeare

Run, Shelley, Run, Gertrude Samuels

Running Loose, Chris Crutcher

Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne

Secrets Not Meant to Be Kept, Gloria Miklowitz

A Separate Peace, John Knowles

Seventeen Against the Dealer, Cynthia Voight

Sex Education, Jenny Davis

Sheila's Dying, Alden Carter

The Silver Kiss, Annette Klause

Simon Pure, Julian F. Thompson

Singularity, William Sleator

Slaughterhouse Five, Kurt Vonnegut

Slave Dancer, Paula Fox

Snow Treasure, Marie McSwigan

Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself, Judy Blume

Stella Can't Come Out to Play, Fran Arrick

Stotan!, Chris Crutcher

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Stranger with My Face, Lois Duncan

Strega Nona, Tomie de Paola

Summer of Fear, Lois Duncan

Summer of My German Soldier, Bette Greene

Summer Rules, Robert Lipsyte

Sweet Bells Jangled Out of Tune, Robin Brancato

Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush, Virginia Hamilton

The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Beatrix Potter

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, Judy Blume

Taming the Star Runner, S.E. Hinton

A Taste of Blackberries, Doris Smith

Tell Us Your Secret, Barbara Cohen

That's My Baby, Norma Klein

Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neal Hurston

Thirty-six Exposures, Kevin Major

Tiger Eyes, Judy Blume

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Betty Smith

Trouble River, Betsy Byars

The Truth Trap, Francis A. Miller

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Trying Hard to Hear You, Sandra Scoppetone

Tunnel Vision, Fran Arrick

Up A Road Slowly, Irene Hunt

Up Country, Alden Carter

Up in Seth's Room, Norma Fox Mazer

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Eric Carle

Wart, Son of Toad, Alden Carter

A Way Of Love, A Way Of Life: A Young Person's Guide To What It Means To Be Gay, Frances Hanckel and John Cunningham

We All Fall Down, Robert Cormier

Weetzie Bat, Francesca Lia Block

The Westing Game, Ellen Raskin

When the Phone Rang, Harry Mazer

Where It Stops, Nobody Knows, Amy Ehrlich

Where the Reed Fern Grows, Wilson Rawls

Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak

A White Romance, Virginia Hamilton

Winnie the Pooh, A.A. Milne

Winning, Robin Brancato

Words by Heart, Ouida Sebestyn

A Wrinkle in Time, Madeleine L'Engle

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

The Year of the Gopher, Phyllis Naylor

Part 4

Affiliate Actions and Activities

A Plus for the First Amendment
Censorship News Update
By
Rebecca Rapport
(Vol. 10, # 3, September 1985, pages 3 & 4)
Reprinted from the Minnesota English Newsletter, June 1985

"The MCAC Policy on the Freedom to Teach, to Read, and to Express Ideas in the Public Schools" was adopted by the State Board of Education in March as an official state policy. The policy is especially timely considering the latest list of controversial topics being distributed by Phyllis Schafly to parents across the country. Topics she would like to see censored include "autobiography assignments: log books, journals, and diaries," cornerstones in many English teachers' writing classes, as well as such traditionally controversial topics as drug and sex education, death, instruction in nuclear war, discussions of the occult or witchcraft and related subjects. She is encouraging a letter writing campaign in the hopes that what teachers teach can be controlled by parents applying pressure to school administrators. The Minnesota Board of Education policy in its entirety is provided for your careful reading.

A Policy on the Freedom to Teach, to Learn, and to Express Ideas in the Public Schools

The freedoms to teach, to learn, and to express ideas without fear of censorship are fundamental rights held by public school teachers and students as well as all other citizens. These freedoms, expressed and guaranteed in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, must be preserved in the teaching/learning process in a society of diverse beliefs and viewpoints and shared freedoms. Public schools must promote an atmosphere of free inquiry and a view of subject matter reflecting a broad range of ideas so that students are prepared for responsible citizenship. However, criticism of educational resources and teaching methods and the advocacy of additional educational resources are also essential First Amendment rights of students, faculty, parents, and other members of the community.

Public school personnel should:

1. Select curriculum, teaching methods, resources, and materials appropriate to the educational objectives and the maturity and skill levels of the students based on their professional competence as educators and according to established school board policies and procedures. However, teachers should not be allowed to indoctrinate students with their own personal views.
2. Provide students with access to a broad range of ideas and viewpoints.
3. Encourage students to become decision makers, to exercise freedom of thought, and to make independent judgments through the examination and evaluation of relevant information, evidence, facts, and differing viewpoints.
4. Support students' rights to present their ideas even if some people might find the ideas objectionable.
5. Discuss issues, including those viewed by some as controversial, since such discussion is essential to students' development of critical thinking and other skills which prepare them for full participation as citizens in a democratic society.

Each school district board of education should adopt a written policy reflecting the principles included in this policy and stating the criteria, the personnel, and the process to be used to select and to reevaluate curriculum and educational resources and make the policy available to members of the school community and the public.

Individuals or groups outside the public schools should *not* be allowed to:

1. Use the public schools to indoctrinate students with particular viewpoints or beliefs.
2. Determine which viewpoints will be presented or avoided in public schools.
3. Require the disciplining of professional staff for including issues or resources considered controversial in their classes if the reasons for including them are educationally sound.

Adopted by the Minnesota School Board of Education-March 12, 1985

Connecticut's New Academic Freedom Policy a Milestone
(Vol. 6, # 6, November 1981, page 5)

The Connecticut Board of Education voted in September to adopt an academic freedom policy for public schools in that state. The policy affirms that public schools have an obligation to "teach students how to think, not what to think." It further states that "to study an idea is not necessarily to endorse an idea," and that "Public school classrooms are forums for inquiry, not arenas for the promulgation of particular viewpoints."

While it encourages members of the community to voice their opinions about school practices and programs, the Connecticut policy underscores the constitutional and intellectual rights of students and teachers. Marjorie Wilder, assistant to Connecticut Commissioner of Education Mark Shedd, told NCTE that the new policy is broader than earlier counterparts. It recommends that local boards "adopt policies and procedures to receive, review, and take action upon requests that question public school materials and programs." Connecticut's position concurs with NCTE policy as that in "The Students' Right to Read," as well as the Council's recommendations for dealing with complaints. The Connecticut Council of Teachers of English and other education-related groups participated in developing the policy statement. CCTE members testified in favor of the policy at hearings held by the State Board of Education.

The Connecticut policy emerged not from specific attacks on schools, but rather, as part of an effort by the board and the commissioner to offer higher quality education in the state, Wilder said. Earlier in the process of writing the academic freedom policy. Commissioner Shedd told the state board that "Increasingly, the pursuit of equal and excellent

educational programs is threatened by political or religious interest groups that would seek to impose upon the public schools the stamp of their particular opinions, doctrines, or viewpoints."

A great deal of groundwork went into developing the policy, according to Wilder. "It went through many drafts, and a lot of thought and much consultation." Librarians, educators, and teacher unions were asked to comment. The Connecticut Council of Teachers of English cooperated on the new policy through its membership in a statewide Academic Freedom Coalition made up of diverse education-related groups.

Marjorie Wilder told NCTE that "earlier mail and phone calls" to Commissioner Shedd's office "were overwhelmingly in favor of the academic freedom policy, but we faced organized opposition in the final phases. Just before the September meeting of the state board, it surfaced, from parents, organized groups, and churches. September 9 was a long day." After hearing testimony from both sides, the state board members split on their decision, with four voting in favor of the policy, one opposed, and one abstaining. Three board members were absent.

"We are still hearing from opponents," Wilder said. In her opinion, school officials who affirm a distinction between education and indoctrination-as the Connecticut policy does-should be prepared for the likelihood that it will cause opponents to "coalesce."

Asked whether Connecticut's action is new, Chris Pipho of the Education Commission of the States said, "I can't remember anyone else putting forth the idea of academic freedom with responsibility. When I saw the text, I thought I was reading Jefferson .... I see the Connecticut statement as an effort to transcend the arguments that get branded liberal or conservative. I think they are into new territory. It might work .... "

Censorship Attempted at South Lyon High School
by
Jean E. Brown
Saginaw Valley State University Saginaw, Michigan
(Vol. 13, # 1, September, 1988, pages 2 and 3)

The issue of censorship in the public schools is of increasing concern to educators throughout the country. In recent years, many censorship cases have involved the efforts of members of the Radical Right to influence school curricula. Recently, a fundamentalist minister in South Lyon, Mich., launched an attempt remove Julian Thompson's *The Grounding of Group Six* from a Contemporary Novels course at South Lyon High School in which it has been regularly taught. The course is an elective for juniors and seniors, usually taken by students who have chosen not to take either College English 11 or College English 12. Additionally, the school follows a policy that "if a child or parent/guardian object to content in a particular book, a substitute book will be assigned for that particular child." The attack was made by a minister whose son was enrolled in the course.

According to South Lyon School District policy, the minister filed a Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Work form, seeking have the book removed from the curriculum. In his complaint, the minister admitted that he had not read the whole book, but that had "skipped through it." His objections were that the book is "vulgar-[sic] suggestive-[sic] profane" and "encourages you people to use filthy words-[it is] suggestive in sexual relations." The complaint further stated that there is "absolutely not" anything good about the book and "everyone who has looked at it say [sic] the same. "

Following the complaint, South Lyon High School Principal Dr. Marie Vitale established a committee of nine to review the charges and to examine the book to determine if it was an appropriate addition to the curriculum. The committee included Dr. Vitale, Assistant Principal Marilyn Mitchell (who had previously taught the Contemporary Novels class), a teacher, a media specialist, three parents (one appointed by the minister), and two students. By an 8-1 vote, the committee determined that "there are sufficient redeeming qualities in this novel to justify leaving the choice of whether or not to retain it in the curriculum to the educational professionals." The book follows the South Lyon Board of Education Policy Statement for the selection of instructional materials. *The Grounding of Group Six* clearly conforms to the Board's selection criteria that a work has "both faults and virtues, and if the virtues far outweigh the faults, a work may be included .... "

Although South Lyon High School was well prepared with policies and procedures to follow when faced with a censorship attempt, the attack still had a jarring effect. The book is currently on the shelf as a group of teachers review it further to determine whether it will remain in the curriculum. The book remains in the school's library.

The minister has used this issue as a springboard for his attempt to impose his views and those of his followers on the schools and libraries in the area. He has formed a group called Parents Against School Smut (PASS) with the intent of banning books it finds offensive. Part of the group's objective is to urge a negative vote on an upcoming school millage.

This type of relentless attack can happen in any school district. Teachers and administrators should make sure that they have policies in place to combat infringement against the freedoms provided in the Constitution.

Affiliate Resolutions
(Vol. 14, # 1, April 1989 , pages 1 & 2)

On Censorship

At its February 23, 1989, meeting, the Executive State Board of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English expressed its repugnance at the death threats by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini against Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*.

At the same time, censorship of instructional materials is pervasive nationally and in Oregon and is increasing sharply. Recently, for instance, conservatives and "New Right" activists organized opposition to selection of Holt's *Impressions* language arts series which was chosen by the largest school district in Oregon. The censors objected, among other things, to some of the ethnic literature and the customs and activities of native Americans.

A recent national study sponsored by the American Library Association and other professional groups showed that 20 percent of the nation's school districts and 30 percent of our schools' libraries have encountered challenges to materials, and these challenges have influenced the selection of instructional materials.

Given this troubling situation, the OCTE board felt it could not remain silent on the extreme censorship case against Rushdie. The resolution below was sent to all major newspapers, libraries, and booksellers in the state, as well as

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to other professional organizations, OCTE members, and schools in Oregon.

Oregon Council of Teachers of English Resolution against Censorship
(Vol. 14, # 1, April 1989, page 2)

The death threats against Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*, strike at the heart of educational values long upheld by teachers.

The OCTE Board lends its voice to those who have expressed outrage over the acts of intimidation of censorship.

English teachers at all levels of education have always fostered the free expression and discussion of ideas, whether those ideas come from the least experienced student-writer or the most celebrated writers of whatever time or place.

Therefore, the Board urges bookstores and libraries not to succumb to intimidation by refusing to make available Rushdie's book.

And the Board urges Oregon teachers and public officials to discuss these issues to inform students and citizens about the principles of free speech and about the values of open, honest exchange of ideas.

Curriculum Director Prohibits Textbook Representatives from Talking to Teachers
(Vol. 14, # 1, April 1989, page 2)

A letter last spring to textbook representatives serving Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nevada, prohibited the representatives from contacting any Clark County School District employee except at the request of the adoption committee.

The letter, dated May 2, 1988, states, "During the course of the adoption process, June 1988-March 1989, please do not contact or sample any Clark School District employee or elected or appointed official on any matter related to the textbooks you submit, except at the request of the adoption committee. Failure to abide by this request will result in the immediate removal of your textbook from consideration for adoption by the Clark County School District. Publisher representatives may be invited by the evaluation committees to answer questions regarding the texts."

The Nevada State Teachers of English and the Southern Nevada Teachers of English have condemned the Clark County School Distfict's directive and have supported the following resolution:

Whereas, school administrators have instituted policies prohibiting access to published educational materials for teachers and elected or appointed officials; and

Whereas, this denies free access to educational information to professional educators and elected or appointed officials; and

Whereas, this policy constitutes an infringement on academic freedoms; and

Whereas, this policy constitutes restraint of trade; therefore be it *Resolved*, Nevada Teachers of English and Southern Nevada Teachers of English are opposed to the policy of prohibiting the sampling of materials to individual teachers and elected or appointed officials by publishers for any reason.

SNTE/SLATE Representative Marcia Story stated, "We feel it is our professional obligation to review and try out texts and methods and then to offer our suggestions to the district's textbook committee." The directive would prohibit this role of the classroom teacher.

Members of the Southern Nevada Teachers of English are concerned about the unconstitutional restraint of trade which restricts their academic freedoms and effectively limits their freedom of access to information.

Publishers' representatives, too, are reacting to these restrictions. One representative is no longer willing to conduct workshops for the Southern Nevada Teachers of English because of fear of violating the district's restriction on talking to Clark County employees, according to a spokesperson from SNTE.

Censorship: A Personal Experience
by
Shelley Borror Jackson
Blue Hill Consolidated School
Blue Hill, Maine
(Vol. 14, # 3, August 1989, page 2)

(Editor's note from 1989: This essay is reprinted from "News and Views in English Language Arts," the newsletter of the Maine Council for English Language Arts, March 1989.)

Censorship in 1988? Certainly not in what I considered an intellectually enlightened community. Censorship just could not be a threat in a classroom where kids voraciously read every work Stephen King ever wrote, routinely rent each sequel to *Nightmare on Elm Street*, and write their own fiction filled with violence, murder, and destruction. Burned books, altered texts, all the trappings of censorship are now obsolete, part of a narrow attitude toward literature with which the reader disagreed or felt discomfort. In my mind, censorship was history, at most a part of our literary tradition, but certainly not an issue I would ever face as a junior high language arts teacher in Blue Hill, Maine.

That notion died a quick death this fall. After seeing my students' eagerness to both read and write horror, I decided to give them an historical perspective of the genre. Among others the authors included Edgar Allan Poe, Shirley Jackson, Washington Irving, and Alfred Hitchcock. If you can anticipate the objection to one author's inclusion in this unit of study, you are, right now, better prepared to contend with the threat of censorship than I was.

The day after assigning Poe's "The Black Cat," I found a handful of students whose parents had forbidden them to read the story, to answer any of my questions pertaining to the assignment, or to participate in any class activities related to the work; in short, the students had been told to disregard any class time focused on this particular piece.

I immediately and passionately questioned how anyone could object to a reading of one of our classic American authors. I quickly realized, however, that at that point, the answer to my question was unimportant. At that instant I had a class of twenty-nine seventh graders, twenty-five of whom were anxious to discuss a story they had eagerly read and four

of whom were near belligerence in their resistance to class participation.

The following decisions were made—quickly.

1. I continued my lesson as assigned and planned. The vast majority of the class was prepared and ready to learn more about Poe and his place in horror stories. I felt they had earned and deserved a consistent response from me.
2. I informed the dissenting students that they and their parents do indeed have the right to make choices regarding education, and because they had made this decision together, parents would certainly understand the reason that a student had been penalized for missing work.
3. I fervently reminded myself that I am a professional educator who was hired to facilitate learning with the appropriate materials of my choice. I had made a choice which I felt had benefited all students. I could not, with clear conscience, compromise what I felt would teach most and best.

These were successful decisions, but were so due to three necessary factors. First, I strongly suspected that I would have nearly unconditional administrative support. Second, I had an unfaltering belief in the validity of my choice of that literature within the context of our study. Third, I felt confident that once parents had seriously examined the story, the literature would defend itself.

The final step, then, in this quickly unfolding series of events was to produce a means through which parents could unemotionally voice their objections to my choice of literature. I felt that by writing their responses, parents would be removed from the passion that a verbal conversation could produce. I thus asked the concerned parents to answer, on paper, the following questions.

1. Have you read the entire piece?
2. Are you apprised of the teacher's purpose in using this work?
3. Of what value is this work?
4. Are you aware of critics' judgment of this work?
5. To which lines, themes, or characters do you specifically object?
6. Should this work not be used for your child alone, or should it not be taught at all? Why?
7. What work do you suggest the school use to achieve the same purpose as the one under consideration?

Again, it seems to me that in asking a parent to take the time to write a response, the teacher is more likely to keep the focus of the objections on the text itself, rather than on the more emotional side of censorship that can flirt with political, moral, or religious ethics. These questions did seem to give the textual objections a sense of direction, while also giving the parent the opportunity to both articulate concerns and propose alternatives.

No discussion of censorship in 1988 can end without a forewarning about the real trauma it can create. After my incredulous shock subsided, I felt demoralized that my teaching could raise this kind of ire, hostility, and belligerence. I was saddened by the reality that censorship issues are now a part of a darker age in our country's literary well-being, and I felt fatigued over my now realistic knowledge that as a teacher of literature, I will, no doubt, face this issue again. Subsequent encounters will not, however, shock, intimidate, or threaten me; in a final analysis, this first experience with censorship has strengthened my belief in the need for teachers to be confident in their sense of professionalism. If the likes of Twain, Salinger, Cormier, Poe, or Bradbury can come under fire, then I'm in company I'm proud to keep.

Teachers Sue, Say Freedom to Speak Impinged
by
Frank Santiago
(Vol. 14, # 3, September 1989, page 1)

' Des Moines Register and Tribune Co., Des Moines, Iowa. Used by permission.

(Editor's note from 1989: The issue of open communication by members of an educational institution such as a public school is an important one. A recent case in Iowa is a typical example of the "chain of command" [directions from the top down and information upward through "channels"] versus an open, pluralistic structure. Can a public school educate students to function in a democratic society when the institution itself does not function democratically?)

Teachers don't like bad grades on their report cards either, a flap in United States District Court in Des Moines (Iowa) indicates. The Sigourney Education Association has filed a lawsuit accusing local administrators of unfairly stopping teachers and other employees from speaking to school board members.

The policy, the association contends, resulted in the "downgrading" of three elementary teachers who spoke at a public meeting of the school board last year. James L. Sayre (Iowa State Education Association), lawyer in Des Moines, said the teachers got poorer grades on their performance records because of their comments. They had spoken against a proposal by the administration to move some grades of children from one building to another. The teachers said the necessary facilities were not available at the new location.

The women--Linda Lee, third-grade teacher; Cyrena Buschmann, kindergarten teacher; and Linda Fritche, first-grade teacher--had flawless records but received a "2" grade instead of a "3," the highest rating. The change amounted to getting a "C" instead of an "A," Sayre said. "These records are very important to these teachers, who pride themselves in their professionalism," he said.

Sayre said the administrators have a broad unwritten and longstanding policy that prohibits teachers and other employees from contacting school board members. Administrators prefer that teachers follow the chain of command instead. The teachers had talked to the administrators about the move but the administrators didn't budge from their recommendation, he said.

Sayre said the policy was a restraint of the teachers' free speech and free association and therefore unconstitutional and might be grounds for punitive damages. Earlier cases in other states have limited teachers from speaking out on private matters such as students' grades. But there have been no limits placed on public matters, he said. "Clearly this was a matter of public concern," he said.

The lawsuit asks that the administrators be prevented from using any policy or rule that prohibits employees from talking with the board.

The administrators, including Superintendent Keith Sasseen, elementary school principal Russell Parcell, and high school principal H.T. Jobe, have asked U.S. District Judge Harold Victor to throw out the suit.

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Salute Those Who Stand against Terrorism
by
Charles Levendosky
Editor and Columnist, Casper Star-Tribune
Casper, Wyoming
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(Vol. 14, #3, September 1989, p.3)

Resolution 72-- condemning the threats against the author and publishers of *The Satanic Verses--passed* unanimously by voice vote in the U.S. Senate on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

This resolution, a reworking of an earlier version, was introduced by Sen. Daniel Moynihan, D-NY. It reads in part:

That in recognition of threats of violence made against the above mentioned author (Salman Rushdie) and publisher (Viking U.S.) the Senate-

(1) declares its commitment to protect the right of any person to write, publish, sell, buy, and read books without fear of intimidation;

(2) unequivocally condemns as state-sponsored terrorism the threat of the government of Iran and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to assassinate citizens of other countries on foreign soil;

(3) expresses its support for the publishers and booksellers who have courageously printed, distributed, sold, and displayed *The Satanic Verses* despite the threats they have received. ...

I applaud those who have stood up in support of Rushdie's right to author and Viking's fight to publish *The Satanic Verses--"despite* the threats they have received."

PEN American Center's Freedom to Write Committee sponsored a reading from *The Satanic Verses in* New York City, Feb. 22, just five days after Rushdie had to cancel his publicity tour in the United States because of the ayatollah's threat. Nineteen authors stood next to Susan Sontag, Norman Mailer, and Larry McMurtry and read portions of the novel in The Columns, a public space in downtown Manhattan. Authors have appeared on major network television and spoken on National Public Radio to claim their solidarity with Rushdie. One writer made the point for all of them: "If Rushdie is guilty, I am guilty. If you condemn Rushdie, condemn me."

The threats are real. Two bookstores and the *Riverdale Press, a* community newspaper in New York, have been firebombed, so far. The *Riverdale Press* had published a strong editorial against the ayatollah's death threat. Viking publishers in both the United States and in England now have trained dogs sniffing their mail for explosives.

On March 2, Peter Sissons, a TV interviewer in London, was put under police protection after he received an anonymous telephone threat for supposedly insulting Ayatollah Khomeini during an interview with Iran's former charge d'affaires Mohammad Mehdi Akhoond Zadeh Basti. The anonymous caller claimed to represent the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution. During the interview, Sissons had merely asked Basti: "Do you understand that we don't regard it as civilized to kill people for their opinions? Do you understand that people in this country fought a world war to protect themselves and others from being murdered for their beliefs?"

Merely to doubt that putting a contract out on an author's life is civilized behavior puts the doubter's life in jeopardy. The threats are real. They ripple outward.

Despite the threats, bookstores in Wyoming advertised Rushdie's novel. They stand firm for the right of a free people to write, publish, sell, buy, and read books. I applaud them. I applaud the courage of their owners; they protect our rights against the implied threat to their lives. The threats are real.

Terrorism is faceless. It comes cloaked in darkness. It firebombs; it calls anonymously in the night; it sprays the air with flying steel. The threats are real.

In towns and cities where there are large communities of Moslems, some bookstore owners are afraid of even ordering Rushdie's novel, much less advertising it. Fear trembles them into silence. A woman who declined to add her Colorado bookstore's name to a list of advertisers who offer *The Satanic Verses*, spoke of being alone, of her fear, of what might happen to her or her livelihood. This is how terrorism snakes its way into the heart. Fear.

It does not matter whether one agrees with what Rushdie wrote or not, the issue is the right to express and to receive ideas. Essentially, freedom of expression has little significance if it only protects ideas and sentiments with which we agree. In the diversity of our nation, our citizens disagree in a great many important areas of life Freedom of expression gains its significance when the people stand up to protect the expression of sentiments and ideas with which they do not agree. That's the essence of the First Amendment.

During the Nazi occupation of Belgium, when Jews were forced by decree to wear yellow armbands with the Star of David sewn on them, Christians in Antwerp also pinned yellow armbands with the Star of David to their sleeves The citizens of Belgium were saying in effect, if it is a crime to be a Jew, it is a crime to be a Christian. If Jews are guilty, I am guilty.

Historians estimate that one-fifth of the Belgium Jews were saved by this simple but courageous act that pointed out our common humanity. Terrorism cannot be everywhere; terrorism cannot condemn everyone.

It isn't just writers, publishers, and booksellers who are at risk here. It is the freedom to read, too. Readers risk losing their rights if they don't express their solidarity with Rushdie. Terrorism cannot be everywhere, and we cannot allow the ayatollah to hold our First Amendment hostage. Whether you intend to read the book or not, buy it. Put it on your book shelf. Solidarity. If Rushdie is guilty, the First Amendment is guilty. If Rushdie is guilty, we are guilty. Terrorism can't be everywhere.

And for every bookstore bombed, for every person killed in regard to protecting the tight of this novel to be published, there should be memorial readings from *The Satanic Verses* and from the First Amendment. All over America. Terrorism cannot be everywhere; it cannot condemn everyone.

If Rushdie is guilty, I am guilty. America's freedom must not be held hostage.

Political Tactics
(Vol. 15, # 2, September 1990, pages 1 & 2)

You'd think a board of education would adhere to its negotiated settlement with a local association. But too often, unfortunately, that isn't the case. Locals always need to stay alert and take action to protect their contractual rights.

No local is more alert these days than the 157-member Galion Education Association in Ohio.

Last July (1989), by a 5-0 vote, the Galion school board agreed to a contract provision that gives teachers the right to select and use outside materials that are relevant to their courses and appropriate to the level, ability, and maturity of their students.

Despite this new contract provision, one school board member, incensed by a showing of *Romeo and Juliet* to Galion ninth graders, is now trying to deny teachers their contractual right to choose their own teaching materials. The board member is promoting the school board candidacy of two citizens who support his views.

In response, the GEA is endorsing two board incumbents who support academic freedom. The campaign involvement, says GEA President Guy Freas, is the local's first in 12 years.

"We're learning everything we can about censorship tactics," Freas says. "We now know that it's a common practice for censors to fill school boards with their people. And we know that the local censors work closely with national groups."
(from *NEA NOW*, a publication of the National Education Association.)

Rebecca Allen Receives Free Speech Award
(Vol. 15, #1, April 1990, page 2,)

The Dr. Marketta Laurila Free Speech Award was given to Rebecca Allen, former sixth-grade teacher at Meadowbrook Elementary School, Canton, North Carolina.

Allen was cited for her efforts to encourage her students to practice the democratic process. A local industry, Champion International, was opposing the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to force a reduction in the plant's waste deposits in Pigeon Creek. The company admitted that it was pumping waste into the river, but stated that the 2,100 employee plant would be forced to close if it had to meet the EPA's requirements.

In 1987, Allen refused to remove posters and buttons regarding the controversial case from her classroom door. Meadowbrook's principal had requested that teachers have students write the EPA on Champion International's behalf. Instead, Allen encouraged her students to research all sides of the issue. She allowed them to write their personal views, pro or con. According to Allen, her purpose was to teach her students that in a democracy, people are free to discuss openly all sides of an issue.

Apparently, Superintendent Charles McConnell disagreed. In response to Allen's lesson on the democratic process, McConnell removed the posters from her classroom. Allen subsequently received an unfavorable job evaluation and was demoted.

The Western Chapter of the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has contended that the Haywood County Schools violated Allen's right to free speech and forced her resignation. It also contended that Haywood County school officials violated the rights of Allen's students by interfering in their education.

Allen resigned from Meadowbrook and presently teaches in Andrews, North Carolina. Her award is named for a former University of North Carolina professor who was denied reappointment following statements opposing the United States government's policies in Central America.

ACLU Case against Haywood County Schools Settled
(Vol. 15, # 2, September 1990, page 1)

The above account from the *SLATE Newsletter* (April 1990), reported that Rebecca Allen, a teacher formerly in a Canton, NC, school, had received the Dr. Marketta Laurila Free Speech Award for refusing to remove from her classroom posters and buttons that represented student views which were contrary to the school's administration.

In May, Rebecca Allen announced a moral victory when her lawyers settled a federal free speech lawsuit against the Haywood County Schools.

Rebecca Allen and her ACLU attorneys argued that school officials violated her constitutional rights when they removed student posters concerning a local environmental issue. Terms of the settlement included a statement from Haywood County Superintendent Charles McConnell regretting the incident. However, the statement contained no admission of wrongdoing.

The statement said in part, "McConnell regrets that circumstances, in his opinion, required him to remove Mrs. Allen's posters from the walls of the hall of Meadowbrook School. It was not his intention to violate Mrs. Allen's constitutional right of freedom of speech. In his judgment, removal of the posters was necessary because of the volatile circumstances at the time."

Rebecca Allen was willing to accept McConnell's statement. "By his (McConnell's] admitting he did something wrong--that is fair and equitable," she stated. The case, sponsored by the North Carolina Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, resulted in no cash settlement for damages.

AFCON: The Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska
(Vol. 15, # 2, September, 1990, page 2)

The Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska came about as a result of the Advocates for Intellectual Freedom (AFIC) concern for statewide awareness of and support for intellectual freedom. According to Dr. Mel Krutz, Central Community College, a current member of the NCTE Standing Committee Against Censorship and a founder of AFCON, AFIC members contacted 40 other organizations which AFIC felt had a strong interest in the issue of intellectual freedom.

AFCON was formed in January, 1988 after adopting a constitution and electing officers to pursue common goals. The coalition currently includes the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English, the Nebraska High School Press Association, the Nebraska Association of University Professors, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chapter of the

American Association of University Professors, the Lincoln (NE) Education Association, the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union, and the Omaha Education Association, as well as individual members.

Purpose

AFCON's purpose is to promote academic freedom, defined as intellectual freedom, and including freedom of belief, freedom of expression, and access to information and ideas in educational and research contexts.

Goals

In support of the above-stated purpose, AFCON shall:

--support applications of the First Amendment in academic contexts, including schools, colleges, universities, libraries

---educate Nebraskans about the meaning and value of intellectual freedom, intellectual diversity, mutual respect, open communication, and uninhibited pursuit of knowledge, including the role of these ideals in academic contexts and in democratic self-government

--assist students, teachers, librarians, and researchers confronted with censorship, indoctrination, or suppression of information or ideas

--act as liaison among groups in the state of Nebraska that support academic freedom

Specific Activities

--publish a newsletter reporting significant actions and cases of danger to intellectual freedom

--provide educational forums and programs

--monitor relevant legislative and administrative meetings as pertained by 501(3)c status

---develop model procedures and policies

--support, in the form of information and advice, referral for relevant legal assistance, for persons or groups whose intellectual freedom is threatened

---develop educational resources appropriate to schools and other institutions

--issue press releases and informational statements in specific cases

Censorship: A Position Statement of the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English
(Vol. 15, # 2, September, 1990, page 1)

In this decade, attempts to limit and restrict classroom media have increased extensively, and, in fact, in 1986-87 this state was recognized as leading the nation in attempted-censorship cases brought to conclusion. Not only are censors advocating narrow topics and prescribed print and film content, they are also urging teachers to curtail and eliminate the discussion of ideas and the probing of issues, both of which are necessary for intellectual development.

The Nebraska Council of Teachers of English stands with the National Council of Teachers of English, the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska, and the National Coalition Against Censorship on this issue. We believe that it is the professional, legal, and moral obligation of every teacher, administrator, parent, and school board member to make intellectual freedom possible, and it is the responsibility of all teachers to select materials based on a wide variety of educational, aesthetic, moral, creative, intellectually stimulating, and thought-provoking criteria, and to keep information open and available for examination and debate. A sound and complete education demands it. We believe that intellectual freedom is not only the responsibility of a pluralistic democratic society, it is its strength. It cannot exist on less.

Action Resolution

We therefore affirm and resolve

1. To support the student's right to read; to explore issues and ideas; to debate philosophies and ideologies; to experience events beyond the limitations of individual existence; to reach for educational, aesthetic, moral, creative, and intellectually stimulating concepts and content: to be challenged to think creatively and logically; to hypothesize, visualize, project, solve, and dream as extensively as possible.
2. To be alert to the possibilities of self-censorship and/or of inadvertent censorship of others based on rationales of prudence, taste, standards, or misunderstandings of legal or professional requirements.
3. To enact events and activities such as forums, debates, presentations, and inservice programs that result in public and professional awareness of these issues.
4. To follow legislation concerning educational issues in the Unicameral and maintain contact with the education committee and state senators, sharing insight into issues that particularly affect intellectual freedom.
5. To support the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska by maintaining NebCTE's membership and active involvement.
6. To continue Advocates for Intellectual Freedom as a standing committee of NebCTE to lead in the achievement of these resolutions, knowing that they can be best realized through the involvement and support of all.

Michigan Teachers Explore Experiences with Censorship
by
Jean E. Brown
Region 4 Representative,
SLATE Steering Committee
(Vol. 17, # 1, April 1992, pages 3 and 4)

In a survey completed by Michigan Council of Teachers of English members during the section meetings at their conference last fall, most respondents related experiences that either they or their colleagues had had with censorship. Among the texts that have been challenged here in Michigan are the following: *To Kill a Mockingbird, Catch 22, Dracula, Slaughterhouse Five, The Catcher in the Rye, Siddartha, Lord of the Flies, Brave New World, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, William 's Doll, The Chocolate War,* "The Lottery," *Memories of a Childhood, A Christmas Carol, The Crucible, My Friend Flicka, The Grounding of Group Six,* the V.C. Andrews series, and Scholastic's *Imaginations.* Complainants who requested the removal of these texts from classrooms or libraries argued that the texts would harm those who read them, citing reasons such as the presence of swear words, Satanism, or sex.

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While there are no surprises among the books that were targets, since most are classics and have been challenged elsewhere, teachers are becoming more concerned that teaching practices, assignments, and the uses of media are now open to challenges, too. The participants in the survey related their experiences with censorship of writing assignments. One objection was to the use of "contemporary" language; while another complaint was the result of students writing about a Halloween experience. Journal writing and experiences with any type of autobiographical writing also have been challenged. Some participants reported challenges to the use of any film with other than a G rating or objections to any media that is "realistic."

Censors (those who make a practice of trying to control the curriculum as opposed to concerned parents who might have particular objections and only seek to control what their own children are exposed to) are relentless. Historically, we know that ignoring potential censors is a self-defeating action. Censors do not go away, nor are they often satisfied with small victories. Many censors are like addicts, propelled by an ever-expanding desire to have their will prevail.

One danger in the charges that would-be censors make is that frequently they seem so absurd and uninformed that teachers too often fail to take the charges seriously unless they are specifically affected. Until teachers either experience censorship directly or witness it first hand, it is an unpleasant abstraction at best. I have heard teachers repeatedly say "We don't have those kinds of problems in our district," or similar comments. Unfortunately, we have learned that no place is immune, nor is any book, video, or teaching practice. Teachers can be challenged for teaching a book that they have used for years or for introducing a new teaching method. We cannot anticipate what will incur the wrath of the censors, nor can we be too well-prepared to meet any challenge. This is demonstrated by the survey respondents, 78% of whom have experienced some type of challenge to either their selection of teaching materials or their classroom practices (see Table 1). Ninety-one percent of these respondents are personally aware of challenges that their colleagues have experienced. The survey results also indicate that the majority of challenges still occur against books and other reading assignments; however, challenges to other classroom practices and materials are on the rise.

The responses of the section meeting participants reveal the experiences that they and their colleagues have had with challenges to their classroom practices. While there were few responses (34 usable returns), the responses do present valuable data. The findings (presented as percentages) are summarized in the following two charts. Where percentages do not equal 100%, the missing numbers reflect no response.

Table 1 Experiences with Challenges

Type of Experience	Yes	No
Individual experienced challenge	78%	22%
Individual knows of challenge	91	9
Challenges to reading	52	48
Challenges to writing	22	74
Challenges to methods	30	61
Challenges to non-print materials	13	87
Aware of challenges to reading	48	52
Aware of challenges to writing	4	96
Aware of challenges to methods	30	70
Aware of challenges to non-print material	26	65

In assessing the experiences that the respondents have had, the next chart (see Table 2) refers to the types of censorship that they have encountered. The eight categories listed are from the NCTE pamphlet, "Censorship: Don't Let It Become an Issue in Your School" (p. 5). The first three of these categories constitute one of the most troubling aspects of censorship, self-censorship in which teachers themselves make the decisions to limit their students' experiences. The size of the sample is reflected in these responses because the number of responses in two categories, suppression by community pressure or removal by direct edict, is not reflective of general censorship practices.

Table 2 Types of Censorship

	Individual	Colleague
"Selection"	43%	48%
Deliberate exclusion	13	52
Book alteration	8	22
Required book list	0	17
Suppression community	13	30
Direct edict	0	26
Deliberate omission	4	26
Curtailment of funds	4	4

The remaining section of survey results explores the censorship of student publications. Nationally, there have been an increased number of cases since the Hazelwood decision. In our survey over one third of the respondents spoke of censorship by schools and one in five acknowledged that it had happened on the district level. Perhaps the section of the survey that provides the greatest opportunity for action involves the questions concerning school and district policies in meeting challenges (see Table 3). A clear majority of the respondents teach in schools and districts in which either there is not a policy or they do not know if there is a policy. Only 17% of the respondents indicated that there is any attempt to educate teachers about the policies even if they are in existence. In districts without policies, teachers should work with their administration to establish them; however, policies designed to address challenges are not enough. A more crucial approach is to establish policies for selection. Additionally, teachers should have clearly articulated rationales for both teaching materials and methods so they can respond when questions arise and hopefully defuse potential challenge situations before they fester. The entire staff, teachers, administrators, and support staff also need to be educated about policies.

These data are based upon a limited sample of Michigan English language arts teachers; however, the experiences that these teachers relate mirror those of teachers in other regions. A clear message that arises from the current number and type of challenges is that every book, tape, video, assignment, and teaching method is a potential target for censors. Challenges are virtually impossible to anticipate, but teachers must be prepared to have logical, well-articulated rationales for all that they do in their classrooms. Additionally, schools and school districts need to establish policies and procedures to handle challenges. Furthermore, all teachers should have training in applying both the policies and procedures before

there is an actual challenge. Frequently, the greatest assistance that would-be censors have is to catch school personnel unaware and surprised. We can never be too prepared for censors.

Table 3 Policies

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Does school have policy to meet challenges?	39%	22%	39%
Does district have policy to meet challenges?	36	4	43
Are teachers educated about the policies?	17	39	47
Have student publications been censored by school?	35	39	9
Have student publications been censored by district?	22	22	13

Part 5
Legislation

School Prayer Bill Stirs House Conflict
(Vol. 5, #8, Sept. 1980, p.2)

After delaying for more than a year, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil Liberties and the Administration of Justice held hearings July 29-30 on a bill which would remove all cases involving voluntary prayer in public schools and public buildings from the jurisdiction of the federal courts.

The bill, favored by evangelical Christian groups, is opposed by the National Council of Churches and other major religious groups. Their witnesses contended at the hearings that religious education is a responsibility of individual parents, on which government should not intrude. They said the bill, known as the Helms amendment, would prevent the high court from carrying out its duty to defend the U.S. Constitution.

The House subcommittee hearing were scheduled after proponents of the measure had collected almost enough signatures on a petition to discharge the bill from committee and bring it to floor debate. The Senate passed the measure in April, but the House subcommittee had delayed action. The bill has been described by opponents as an effort to circumvent the U.S. Supreme Court's rulings of the 1960s that called prayer in public schools a violalation of the constitutional separation of church and state.

In the States: Censorship Bill Dispute in Illinois
(Vol. 6, # 5, September 1981, page 4)

Teachers and librarians in Illinois were heartened in May when the state House of Representatives voted down a bill that would have made librarians subject to jail terms for making books thought to be objectionable or obscene available to library patrons under 18. The state Senate's version of the bill died in committee, but the House version produced "tumultuous and heated debate" on the House floor before going down to defeat 123-32.

Representative Jane Barnes of Oak Lawn, a Chicago suburb, had introduced the bill, which stemmed from complaints by a group of local residents about placement of a graphic sex education book. *Show Me*, on shelves in the children's section of Oak Lawn's public library. (The book was eventually transferred to adult shelves.) The Illinois Library Association, aided by the Chicago-based American Library Association, led the fight against the bill.

"Both House Bill 462 and Senate Bill 164 would have removed the 'affirmative defense' librarians have enjoyed under the Illinois 'Harmful Matter Statute' for many years," Deborah Miller, legislative educator for the ILA, wrote in the July issue of ALA's *Intellectual Freedom Newsletter*. "This defense exempts inability for provision of 'harmful' materials to persons under eighteen years of age, when done ... for a legitimate scientific or educational purpose. The statutory definition of 'harmful' material is so vague as to be blatantly unconstitutional, but this merely compounded the problem ....

"There were many reasons for the defeat. Most telling was the response of Illinois citizens to the issue .... There was an enormous groundswell of individual citizen outrage. Library patrons called to see what they could do. Many people not heretofore identified with any library constituency appeared at House and Senate hearings to defend access to information in their libraries." Miller also cited support from social, educational, and professional associations, "every major newspaper," and radio and television stations throughout the state. Nevertheless, she said, the struggle against the bill took its toll. "In Illinois, we are exhausted by the great effort spent to defeat this legislation."

Representative Barnes said she would continue to seek a way to keep "pornographic" material out of libraries. (AP, CUNG: 4/10, 17, 5/15/81)

Creationism Laws Pose
Problems for States, Schools
(Volume 6, #6, November 1981, page 6)

Louisiana has become the second state to pass legislation requiring that if evolution is taught in its public schools, scientific creationism must be taught along with it. Louisiana teachers must now give equal time to the biblical concept that God placed humans on earth in their present form. A challenge to a similar law, passed by the Arkansas legislature last March, was scheduled for a court test in late October. The American Civil Liberties Union brought the suit.

"At least 18 state legislatures have introduced bills calling for the teaching of scientific creationism in public schools," *Department of Education Weekly* reported in August. It's unknown how many of these will survive the legislative process.Meanwhile, the practical problems of implementing the Louisiana equal-time law were confronting state school officials. They told Alex Heard of *Education Week* (August 24) that they may have to advise a seven-person committee of creation science which, according to the new law, must be appointed by the governor to help develop curriculum guides for local districts.

Don W. McGehee, science supervisor with the Louisiana State Department of Education, said that because the state legislature does not want to fund creation science teaching, it will apparently be left to local districts to find the money to implement the program by diverting funds from other programs. Curriculum development, library materials, inservice workshops, and other costs could run from $1.8 million to $7 million statewide, McGehee said, depending on how thorough implementation becomes. Minimum competency testing, mandated in 1979, is now being implemented in Louisiana, and standards will now have to be written for creation science. McGehee voiced concern about "unsatisfactory" texts submitted to him for review by creationist publishers. (LR: 9/17;WP: 7/23/'81)

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The New Right's Initiatives In Social Legislation
(Volume 7, #2, March 1982, pages 4 and 5)

Ever since the conservative sweep in the 1980 Congressional elections, action to reverse social legislation of recent years has been expected. Deferred by concentration on economic issues over the past year, some of the initiatives introduced by conservatives are beginning to claim attention. The most dramatic New Right victory so far is a Senate vote in November to bar the Justice Department from using federal funds to "prevent the implementation of programs of voluntary prayer and meditation in the public schools." The measure went through as an amendment to appropriations for that department. (The Supreme Court in a 1962 decision banned prayer in public schools on constitutional grounds.)

Even though the Justice Department has rarely been involved in court cases brought by individuals on questions of separating church and state in the schools, observers called the Senate vote symbolic. Senator Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) called the prayer legislation an "outrageous, unconstitutional action." He told the *New York Times'* Steven Roberts (November 17) that members with "extreme points of view, single points of view, . . . are now in the majority in the Senate," and that the most liberals and moderates can do is attempt to delay conservative moves in hopes the 1982 election will return more moderates to the Senate.

Family Protection Act

Another initiative introduced in the Senate by conservative lawmakers and carried over to the new session is the Family Protection Act, which, *Education USA* noted January 11, "addresses school prayer, sex education, tax credits, textbooks, busing for desegregation, and would establish a no-strings block grant for public schools. Few observers believe Congress would ever approve the entire bill; more likely Congress will face the issues addressed in the act through many smaller bills and amendments to other bills."

The act would specify parental rights to review texts and visit classrooms. It instructs local judges to expedite suits brought by parents against the schools. And it would withhold federal funds from districts that "require the forced payment of dues or fees as a condition of employment for teachers." The act would also let parents set up equivalents of IRA accounts to save $2,500 tax-free dollars a year for children's tuition at the elementary, secondary, and college level.

Reporter Frances Fitzgerald wrote recently that by handing control back to the states, provisions of the act could weaken a host of currently accepted federal protections against discrimination for women, children, and homosexuals. The issues affected could range from contraception, abortion and divorce counseling to spouse abuse, child abuse, and affirmative action in the job market. Because of its strong bias against federally funded legal services and its various provisions for tax credits to benefit members of families, Fitzgerald reported, the act would deprive the poor and benefit the well-to-do.

"... another section of the act would deny federal funds to educational materials which 'do not reflect a balance between the status role of men and women, do not reflect different ways in which women and men live and do not contribute to the American way of life as it has been historically understood.' The purpose of this garbled sentence," Fitzgerald observed, "is presumably to fix sex-role stereotypes in the amber of the good, old days ...."

The critical distinction visible in Family Protection Act provisions, Fitzgerald commented, is that it departs from the U.S. Constitution's concept of the individual as having rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and substitutes a concept of "the family" left undefined-as "the first unit of government in our society."

Senate sponsors of the Family Protection Act are Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), Jake Garn (R-Utah), Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), and Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). Albert Lee Smith (R-Ala.) is one of the sponsors of the House versions. (WP: 11/17; Vogue, Nov. '81)

Interpreting Reagan Action on School Prayer Initiative
(Volume 7, #4, July 1982, page 5)

When President Reagan last May endorsed the idea of a constitutional amendment to allow prayer in public schools, he told a Rose Garden audience that "no one must ever be forced or coerced or pressured to take part in any religious exercise, but neither should the government forbid religious practice." (AP, CUNQ: 5/7/82)

The *Christian Science Monitor* (May 10) suggested the President may have acted in the hope of heading off a movement in Congress that would go beyond allowing voluntary prayer, to deny the Supreme Court jurisdiction over this issue.

"Most judicial interpreters see the latter as patently unconstitutional and disruptive of the separation of powers principle," *Monitor* writer Curtis J. Sitomer noted.

"Also, some observers see the President's move as an effort to rein in the Moral Majority and other so-called New Right groups that demand radical action on such issues as abortion, capital punishment, and busing, as well as school prayer. Reagan hopes that his official endorsement of school prayer will satisfy these groups, even though it still falls short of their proposed hard-line action banning judicial review."

The Reverend Jerry Falwell, proschool prayer activist, pledged that his evangelical following would "work diligently in both houses of Congress" for passage of the amendment. Before the Reagan announcement, Cecil Todd, leader of the "Revival Fires" Christian Evangelizers Association, delivered to the White House petitions with a million signatures favoring voluntary school prayer in public schools. (EW: 5/12; ED: 4/9'82)

Starter Sheet
The Hatch Amendment
by
Robert F. Hogan (for the SLATE Steering Committee)
(October 1985)

To make the teaching of *Romeo and Juliet* fail-safe, some school systems have sought and found one or another edition of the play from which the editors have excised all the risque passages, those dealing with sex and young love. What is left of the work, however, may still not be safe. Remaining is the matter of the double suicide, without which there is hardly any story to teach. In the minds of some misinformed parents, however, classroom discussion of these suicides is prohibited under recent Federal statute, unless the school has sought and secured prior parental consent for each student who might be party to such discussion. Under similar proscription, many have been led to believe, are such

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classroom activities as role-playing, writing autobiographies, keeping daily journals, and taking part in "open-ended discussions of situations involving moral issues." The Hatch Amendment to the General Education Provisions Act is the statute of record, cited in model letters that have been distributed to hundreds of thousands of parents. At least some of these letters have already been addressed, signed by parents, and sent to local school boards. The consequence has been, at least, a climate of uncertainty for many classroom teachers, administrators, and school board members.

In August 1978 Senator Orrin Hatch introduced an amendment to the General Education Provisions Act. Passed by the Congress, the amendment is formally entitled "The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment." It is more commonly called "The Hatch Amendment." The complete text of this amendment follows:

THE HATCH AMENDMENT

Sec. 439(a). All instructional material, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any research or experimentation program or project shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the children engaged in such program or project. For the purpose of this section "research or experimentation program or project" means any program or project in any applicable program (i.e., federally funded program) designated to explore or develop new or unproven teaching methods or techniques.

(b) No student shall be required, as part of any applicable program, to submit to psychiatric examination, testing, or treatment, or psychological examination, testing, or treatment, in which the primary purpose is to reveal information concerning:

(1) political affiliations;
(2) mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his family;
(3) sex behavior and attitudes;
(4) illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
(5) critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
(6) legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or

(7)income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or in the case of unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent.

Briefly, the amendment establishes two principles: *parental access* and *parental consent*. First, contractors and grant-recipient schools must make available to parents all instructional materials used in connection with federally funded research or experimental programs or projects in which their children are involved. Second, contractors or schools operating such programs or projects must obtain written parental permission before requiring a student to submit to certain kinds of psychiatric or psychological testing or treatment when the primary purpose is to reveal information concerning those seven areas listed under Sec. 439(b) (see immediately above).

The Hatch Amendment was passed over five years ago and at that time evoked little discussion among educators. The principle of prior parental consent for psychological testing in experimental projects had already been established in congressional legislation four years earlier. The principle of parental access to instructional materials has long been observed even without such a mandate. Indeed, where adopting materials is a matter of local option, many schools have opened access to such materials even before adoption. Federal regulations announced in early 1980 by the Department of Education concerning implementation of the Hatch Amendment consisted largely of a restatement of the provisions of the law and some further definitions of terms. Among educators there seemed little new to talk about or to be concerned about.

However, if the Hatch Amendment elicited little discussion among educators, it encouraged considerable discussion among pressure groups who saw in the amendment considerable potential for restricting the school curriculum and controlling teaching methods. The frequent and often enthusiastic alliance of the current Washington administration with conservative and fundamentalist causes provided momentum to these pressure groups and encouragement to press forward with their efforts.

In February 1984, more than five years after the passage of the Hatch Amendment and four years after the Department of Education had issued its regulations to accompany the law, the Secretary of Education announced a new set of proposed regulations "to assure compliance" with the Hatch Amendment and to provide "procedures for handling inquiries and complaints." In September 1984 the Secretary of Education published the final regulations, to become effective November 12, 1984.

As one reads or hears about the regulations, it is important to keep in mind the following points:

> The regulations do not add to or otherwise expand on the listing of the seven topics listed in Sec. 439(b) included above.
>
> The regulations do not apply to programs or projects supported by state or local sources, public or private.
>
> The regulations do establish a channel for concerned parents to turn to the Department of Education as the final arbiter in unresolved local grievances.
>
> Complaints will be considered by the Department of Education only if they originated with students or parents of students actually enrolled in applicable programs.

Nevertheless, many remaining matters and issues, still unresolved, should concern us. Opposition to the regulations is so widespread that it has galvanized into being the Hatch Amendment Coalition, a consortium of more than thirty national organizations. Working together under a coalition umbrella are the National Education Association *and* the American Federation of Teachers *and* the Council for American Private Education, the American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Association of American Publishers.

The Coalition bases "its opposition to the regulations on three major points. The regulations intrude on local policies and curricular decisions, encourage parents to pursue complaints with the federal government, and foster misconceptions about the scope and intent of Section 439 of GEPA. Finally, the reluctance of the Education Department to clarify ambiguities in the regulations has become in and of itself, a major factor in the Coalition's continued opposition to the regulations."

Evidence of misconceptions and ambiguity, referred to by the Coalition, abounds. Appendix A below includes the copy of a suggested letter of parental protest. In an earlier version it was distributed first by the Maryland Coalition of

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Concerned Parents on Privacy Rights in Public Schools with a covering memo addressed to "Parents and Concerned Citizens," dated January 1985. The modified version, included in this Starter Sheet as Appendix A, appears in *Child Abuse in the Classroom*, edited by Phyllis Schlafly, as republished in February 1985. Moreover, according to Mrs. Schlafly, by early 1985 the Eagle Forum had already distributed copies of the form letter to 250,000 parents.

Given the timing of the publication of the Maryland Coalition and the Eagle Forum versions of the form letter of complaint, one might guess that they represent what these groups hope the Federal regulations will eventually say; or that the sponsoring groups saw and took advantage of the ambiguity in the Federal guidelines.

Ambiguity is virtually assured by the bifocal perspective of the activist parent groups. One group is concerned that educators, who hold to value systems (evolutionism, secular humanism, situation ethics, atheism, and the like) that these parents regard as antagonistic to their own value systems, have set out to erode these preferred systems. For them, the Hatch Amendment and its regulations should outlaw any possibility of weakening parental values. Other parents argue from the conviction that their value systems-whatever they may be-are none of the school's business. Their hope is to prevent the schools from finding out about these matters. To oversimplify, the impulse behind a strict construction of the Hatch Amendment seems to include both insuring that the schools do not undermine parental values, and forestalling the teachers' finding out what these values are that the schools are not supposed to undermine.

In any event, ambiguities in the Federal regulations are exemplified in the refusal, so far, by the Department of Education to state the criteria and standards it will bring to bear in deciding whether or not violations of the Hatch Amendment have occurred. It is not clear, for example, how the Department will determine whether or not a complainant has fully exhausted possible remedies at the state and local levels before appealing directly to the Department of Education. Nor is it clear what procedures will be followed and who will determine what constitutes "psychological and psychiatric treatment."

Confronted with these ambiguities, the Department of Education has said merely that it will decide such issues on a "case-by-case basis." That is, it will take each case on its own merits, with no indication of what those merits might be. Meanwhile, groups like the Eagle Forum and the Maryland Coalition compound the issue by disseminating model letters of complaint which may intimidate school officials not sufficiently informed of the issues; and which seem clearly intended to arouse parents and to misinform them about the scope of the influence and control provided them by the Hatch Amendment.

As if all this weren't enough, while action at the federal level centers now on the meaning of and the ambiguity in the Federal regulations for the Hatch Amendment, and activity at the local level is beginning to focus on dealing with parental complaints, another front has opened at the state level. On November 27, 1984, the Department of Education hosted a briefing on the new regulations for representatives from education and from activist groups. The following day, representatives of the activist groups including Phyllis Schlafly, for the Eagle Forum, and Malcolm Lawrence, for the Maryland Coalition of Concerned Parents on Privacy Rights in Public Schools signed and issued a statement, saying, in part, "We believe that the Hatch Amendment regulations... are much too weak and limited in several respects." In March 1985 in her *Phyllis Schlafly Report*, Mrs. Schlafly wrote "... it is essential for state legislatures to pass a Pupil Rights Amendment in every state (the Hatch Amendment covers only federally funded courses.)"

Such bills have already been introduced in some states, including California, Illinois, and North Carolina. In Fact, on May 1, 1985, such a bill was passed by the House and the Senate in Arizona. But it has since been vetoed by the governor.

Courses of Action for SLATE REPRESENTATIVES, other SLATE contributors, Affiliate Leaders, and NCTE Members:

1. Become Better Informed

This SLATE Starter Sheet is little more than what it presents itself as a starter sheet.

a. Perhaps the best single explication of the position taken by the advocates for heightened restrictions on the school is *Child Abuse in the Classroom*, 2nd edition, ed. by Phyllis Schlafly, Alton, Illinois: Pere Marquette Press, 1985 (distributed by Eagle Forum, Alton, IL 62002, @ $4.95).

b. For the most comprehensive discussion of the background of the legislation, an analysis of the Hatch Amendment, analysis of the Hatch Amendment regulations, and suggestions for handling complaints, see *The Hatch Amendment Regulations: A Guidelines Document*, prepared by The Hatch Amendment Coalition (available from Office of Governmental Regulations, American Association of School Administrators, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209, @ $10).

c. For a copy of the "Hatch Amendment Regulations" see the Coalition statement immediately above; or see *Federal Register*, Vol. 49, pp. 174, no. 35318-35322; or request the material from Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20202. (Note: the *Federal Register*, referred to above, is a U.S. Government publication, available in many public or university libraries and in some school district libraries.)

2. Keep an Eye on State Developments

As noted above, state versions of the Hatch Amendment have already been introduced into the legislatures in several states. The sponsors of those bills hope to reach all states with similar legislation.

What makes that prospect more alarming is that the authority of the Department of Education to interfere with local or state decisions concerning curriculum and teaching methods is limited. The extent to which state legislatures can interfere with local education decisions varies considerably from state to state, but the opportunity for such interference is undoubtedly generous in some states.

Minimally, one ought to know when such legislation is introduced into the legislature, what the provisions of the legislation say, which legislators will be most influential in determining the final wording of the legislation, and whether or not the proposed bill reaches the legislature for final action.

3. Share What You Learn with Colleagues and Superiors

What is at stake in all this is clearly not a problem unique to English teachers. Other departments are involved social sciences, life sciences, health education, home economics, etc. Moreover, parents following the script prepared for them by activist groups (see Appendix A) may well make their first point of contact with the school board president, with a suggested copy to the building principal. Those points of contact will almost surely reach out to the central office staff, to other members of the board, and then-perhaps only then- to the individual teacher of the student whose parent(s) have registered the complaint.

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Certainly, the superintendent and staff members who work closely with the board of education ought to know about and become familiar with the references cited above. The administrator, receiving one of the suggested letters of complaint, might appreciate having at hand the suggested letter of reply *(see Appendix B)*, which acknowledges receipt of the letter of complaint, which redirects the complainant to the substance of the Hatch Amendment and the Federal regulations, and which explains the school's responsibility under the Hatch Amendment and the limits of the applicability of that Amendment to a school's program.

There are at least a few remaining school systems which have sought security in a gingery approach to adopting instructional materials and the broader array of materials available to students through the school library. Misled by illusive security which they feel such an approach provides, they have avoided so far drawing up of formal adoption policy for instructional materials, including a policy and procedures for handling complaints, for fear that the preparation of such a statement and its presentation to the Board of Eduction for formal adoption might itself trigger the very kinds of concerns and possible complaints that the cautious approach was intended to forestall in the first place. Even a cursory reading of the *Hatch Amendment Regulations* document cited above will dispelf the illusion of security.

4. Include This Issue in Inservice Programs

Inservice programs take a variety of forms. They may be department meetings in a single school, concurrent sessions on an affiliate program, faculty meetings in a school building, district-wide meetings of subject teachers. One possibility for such a meeting would require little in the way of materials perhaps only copies of the text of the Hatch Amendment (see above) and copies of the letters in the two appendices below. The leader of the session would need to prepare to establish the context for these materials by being familiar with the contents of this starter sheet and, insofar as possible, the references cited above.

One discussion question might be framed in this way: "The Hatch Amendment makes a distinction between *parental access* and *parental consent.* What is the distinction? What happens to that distinction in the suggested letter of complaint?"

Another question might be "The proposed letter of complaint points to a list of topics in which, presumably, the school may not involve students without prior parental consent. Section 439(b) of the Hatch Amendment lists a series of ureas in which students may not be given psychological or psychiatric tests without prior parental consent. Which of the areas *not* included in the Hatch Amendment have been added by the authors of the letter of complaint?"

Still another discussion question might be "What teaching activities are now employed in your school that a conscientious, concerned parent might believe--as a result of reading, signing, and sending the letter of complaint will stop as a result of that complaint until written permission has been granted? Which of those activities, if any, according to the Hatch Amendment itself, probably should stop until that consent is given?"

5. Other Activities

The most topical of SLATE Starter Sheets are written, as this one has been, under constraints of time, space, and single authorship. It is our belief that many readers of this Starter Sheet will think of other activities that might have been included in this section. You are encouraged to describe those you wish to share in a letter to the Chair of the SLATE Steering Committee, NCTE Headquarters, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. The Chair and other members of the SLATE Committee will review those suggestions submitted for possible inclusion in the issues of the SLATE Newsletter over the coming year.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE LETTER FOR PARENTS

Here is a sample letter (prepared by the Maryland Coalition of Concerned Parents on Privacy Rights in Public Schools) which parents can copy and send to the president of their local school board (with a copy to your child's school principal) in order to protect parental and student rights under the Hatch Amendment Regulations effective November 12, 1984. This letter does NOT ask for the removal of any course or material; it merely demands that the schools obey the law and secure written parental consent before subjecting children to any of the following. Parents are NOT required to explain their reasons for denying consent.

TO: School Board President

Date

Dear

I am the parent of .. , .

who attends School. Under U.S. legislation and court decisions, parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education, and pupils have certain rights which the schools may not deny. Parents have the right to assure that their children's beliefs and moral values are not undermined by the schools. Pupils have the right to have and to hold their values and moral standards without direct or indirect manipulation by the schools through curricula, textbooks, audiovisual materials, or supplementary assignments.

Accordingly, I hereby request that my child be involved in NO school activities or materials listed below unless I have first reviewed all the relevant materials and have given my written consent for their use:

- Psychological and psychiatric examinations, tests, or surveys that are designed to elicit information about attitudes, habits, traits, opinions, beliefs, or feelings of an individual or group;
- Psychological and psychiatric treatment that is designed to affect behavioral, emotional, or attitudinal characteristics of an individual or group;
- Values clarification, use of moral dilemmas, discussion of religious or moral standards, role-playing or open-ended discussions of situations involving moral issues, and survival games including life/death decision exercises.

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- Death education, including abortion, euthanasia, suicide, use of violence, and discussions of death and dying;
- Curricula pertaining to alcohol and drugs; ,Instruction in nuclear war, nuclear policy, and nuclear classroom games;
- Antinationalistic, one-world government, or globalism curricula;
- Discussion and testing on interpersonal relationships;discussions of attitudes toward parents and parenting;
- Education in human sexuality, including premarital sex, extra-marital sex, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, group sex and marriage, prostitution, incest, masturbation, bestiality, divorce, population control and roles of males and females. sex behavior and attitudes of student and family;
- Pornography and any materials containing profanity and/or sexual explicitness;
- Guided fantasy techniques; hypnotic techniques; imagery and suggestology;
- Organic evolution, incuding the idea that man has developed from previous or lower types of living things;
- Discussions of witchcraft, occultism, the supernatural, and Eastern mysticism;
- Political affiliations and beliefs of student and family; personal religious beliefs and practices;
- Mental and psychological problems and self-incriminating behavior potentially embarrassing to the student or family;
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the child has family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- Income, including the student's role in family activities and finances;
- Non-academic personality tests; questionnaires on personal and family life and attitudes;
- Autobiography assignments; log books, diaries, and personal journals;
- Contrived incidents for self-revelation; sensitivity training, group encounter sessions, talk-ins, magic circle techniques, self-evaluation, and auto-criticism; strategies designed for self-disclosure (e.g., zig-zag);
- Sociograms; sociodrama, psychodrama; blindfold walks, isolation techniques.

The purpose of this letter is to preserve my child's rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (the Hatch Amendment) to the General Education Provisions Act, and under its regulations as published in the *Federal Register* of Sept. 6, 1984, which became effective Nov. 12, 1984. These regulations provide a procedure for filing complaints first at the local level, and then with the U.S. Department of Education. If a voluntary remedy fails, federal funds can be withdrawn from those in violation of the law. I respectfully ask you to send me a substantive response to this letter attaching a copy of your policy statement on procedures for parental permission requirements, to notify all my child's teachers, and to keep a copy of this letter in my child's permanent file. Thank you for your cooperation.

copy to School Principal Sincerely,

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE RESPONSE LETTER TO PARENTS (Prepared by Hatch Amendment Coalition)

(If a school district receives a form letter from a parent which refers to the Hatch Amendment regulations and requests that a student *not* be involved in a list of activities without prior written parental consent, the school system may respond as follows.)

Dear Parent,

The School District has received your letter requesting that your child not participate in a number of school activities without your being afforded the opportunity to review the materials and to give your written approval. You refer in your letter to regulations which implement Section 439 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). Unfortunately, you have received misleading information about the intent and scope of these regulations. It must be emphasized that the Hatch Amendment, the commonly used. name for Section 439, only applies to programs funded through the U.S. Education Department. Additionally, the regulations only apply to research or experimentation programs or projects and to psychological and psychiatric testing, examination, and treatment whose primary purpose is to delve into one or more of seven areas.

Section 439(a) provides that parents must be given the opportunity to review "all instructional material, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary instructional material which will be used in connection with any *research* or *experimentation* program or project." If your child is to become involved in a research or experimentation program or activity which is funded through the U.S. Department of Education, you will be welcome to review any materials which will be used.

Section 439(b) provides that no student shall be required to submit without *prior written consent* to *psychiatric* or *psychological* examination, testing, or treatment in which the *primary purpose* is to reveal information concerning *one or more* of the following: (1) political affiliations; (2) mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his or her family; (3) sex behavior and attitudes; (4) illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior; (5) critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships; (6) legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or (7) income,

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other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under a program.

Therefore, if your child is to be involved in a program or activity which meets the following criteria, we will request your prior written consent:

(1) The program is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Education.
(2) The activity is a psychological or psychiatric examination, test, or treatment whose primary purpose is to ascertain information in one or more of the seven areas.

If these criteria are not met, the Hatch Amendment (Section 439) regulations do not apply.

Be assured that all activities which occur in our school system are directly related to the goals and objectives of the curriculum and have a distinct academic purpose. If the activity is a federally funded research or experimental program or project, all materials will be available for your review. Likewise, if the activity involves a federally funded psychological or psychiatric test, examination, or treatment whose primary purpose is to obtain information in one or more of the seven areas, or if state law requires parental consent, you will be notified and your permission will be requested.

If you have further questions, please contact

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools